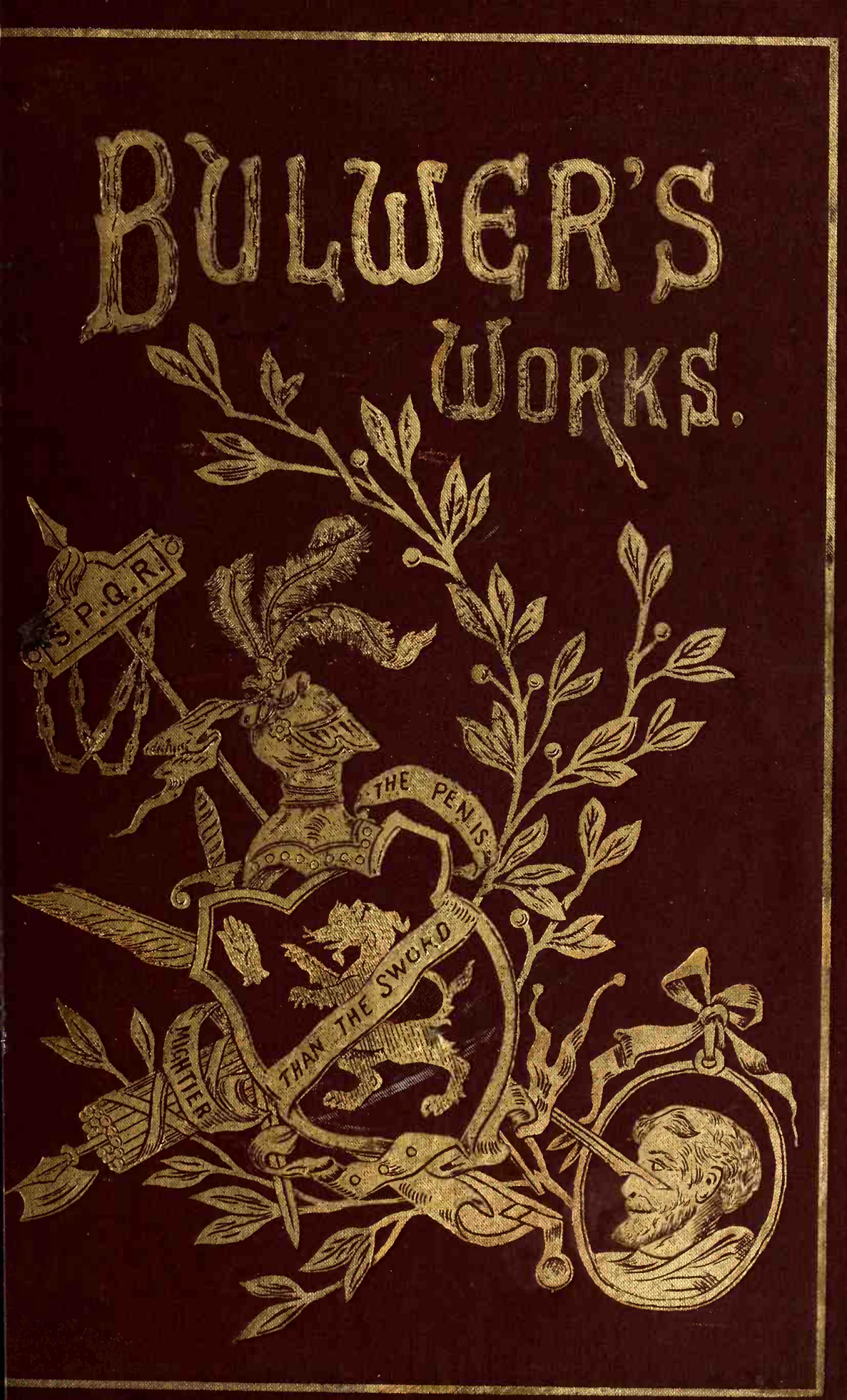
BULWER'S WORKS.



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LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

HAROLD:

THE LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS.

THE CAXTONS: A FAMILY PICTURE.

VOLUME I.

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CONTENTS.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

Preface to the Edition of 1834 5
Preface to the Edition of 1850 8

BOOK THE FIRST.

I. The two Gentlemen of Pompeii 9
II. The Blind Flower-girl, and the Beauty of Fashion.—The Athenian's Confession.—The Reader's Introduction to Arbaces of Egypt 10
III. Parentage of Glaucus.—Description of the Houses of Pompeii.—A Classic Revel 16
IV. The Temple of Isis.—Its Priest.—The Character of Arbaces developes Itself 24
V. More of the Flower-girl.—The Progress of Love 29
VI. The Fowler snares again the Bird that has just Escaped, and sets his Nets for a new Victim 33
VII. The gay life of the Pompeian Lounger.—A miniature likeness of the Roman Baths .. 39
VIII. Arbaces cogs his dice with Pleasure, and wins the Game 44

BOOK THE SECOND.

I. A Flash House in Pompeii, and the Gentlemen of the Classic Ring 51
II. Two Worthies 55
III. Glaucus makes a purchase that afterwards costs him Dear 57
IV. The Rival of Glaucus presses onward in the Race 60
V. The poor Tortoise. New Changes for Nydia 66
VI. The Happy Beauty and the Blind Slave 69
VII. Ione Entrapped.—The Monse tries to gnaw the Net 72
VIII. The Solitude and Soliloquy of the Egyptian.—His character analyzed 74
IX. What becomes of Ione in the House of Arbaces.—The First Signal of the Wrath of the Dread Foe 80

BOOK THE THIRD.

I. The Forum of the Pompeians:—The first rude Machinery by which the New Era of the World was wrought 85
II. The Noonday Excursion on the Campanian Seas 88
III. The Congregation 93
IV. The Stream of Love runs on—Whither? 97
V. Nydia encounters Julia.—Interview of the Heathen Sister and Converted Brother.—An Athenian's notion of Christianity 102
VI. The Porter—The Girl—And the Gladiator ... 105
VII. The Dressing-Room of a Pompeian Beauty.—Important conversation between Julia and Nydia 109
VIII. Julia seeks Arbaces.—The Result of that Interview 112
IX. A Storm in the South.—The Witch's Cavern 115
X. The Lord of the Burning Belt and his Minion.—Fate writes her Prophesy in Red Letters, but who shall Read Them? 120
XI. Progress of Events.—The Plot Thickens.—The Web is Woven, but the Net Changes Hands 124

BOOK THE FOURTH.

I. Reflections on the Zeal of the Early Christians.—Two Men come to a Perilous Resolve.—Walls have Ears—Particularly Sacred Walls 129
II. A Classic Host, Cook, and Kitchen.—Apæcides seeks Ione.—Their Conversation ... 130
III. A Fashionable Party and a Dinner à la mode in Pompeii 136
IV. The Story Halts for a Moment at an Episode. 144
V. The Philtre.—Its Effect 146
VI. A Re-union of Different Actors—Streams that flowed apparently apart rush into one Gulf 149
VII. In which the Reader learns the Condition of Glaucus.—Friendship Tested.—Enmity Softened.—Love the Same;—because the one Loving is Blind 154
VIII. A Classic Funeral 159
IX. In which an Adventure happens to Ione 163
X. What becomes of Nydia in the House of Arbaces.—The Egyptian feels compassion for Glaucus.—Compassion is often a very useless Visitor to the Guilty 164
XI. Nydia affects the Sorceress 166
XII. A Wasp ventures into the Spider's Web 168
XIII. The Slave consults the Oracle.—They who Blind themselves the Blind may Fool.—Two new Prisoners made in One Night ... 170
XIV. Nydia accosts Calenus 173
XV. Arbaces and Ione.—Nydia gains the Garden.—Will she Escape and save the Athenian? 175
XVI. The Sorrow of Boon Companions for our afflictions.—The Dungeon and its Victims. 178
XVII. A Change for Glaucus 182

BOOK THE FIFTH.

I. The Dream of Arbaces.—A Visitor and a Warning to the Egyrtian 190
II. The Amphitheatre..... 195
III. Sallust and Nydia's Letter..... 202
IV. The Amphitheatre once more..... 203
V. The Cell of the Prisoner and the Den of the Dead.—Grief unconscious of Horror..... 208
VI. Calenus and Burbo.—Diomed and Clodius.—The girl of the Amphitheatre and Julia .. 210
VII. The Progress of the Destruction..... 212
VIII. Arbaces encounters Glaucus and Ione 214
IX. The Despair of the Lovers.—The Condition of the Multitude..... 216
X. The next Morning.—The Fate of Nydia.... 218
CHAPTER THE LAST.—Wherein all things Cease .. 219

HAROLD: THE LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The Norman Visitor, the Saxon King, and the Danish Prophetess..... 222

BOOK THE SECOND.

Lanfranc the Scholar 247

BOOK THE THIRD.

The House of Godwin..... 262

BOOK THE FOURTH.

The Heathen Altar and the Saxon Church..... 282

BOOK THE FIFTH.

Death and Love 304

BOOK THE SIXTH.

Ambition 319

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

The Welch King..... 342

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

Fate 359

BOOK THE NINTH.

The Bones of the Dead..... 374

BOOK THE TENTH.

The Sacrifice on the Altar..... 385

BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

The Norman Schemer, and the Norwegian Sea-King. 422

BOOK THE TWELFTH.

The Battle of Hastings 443

THE CAXTONS 483–748

THE

LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

DEDICATION.

TO SIR WILLIAM GELL,

&c., &c.

DEAR SIR:

In publishing a work, of which Pompeii furnishes the subject, I can think of no one to whom it can so fitly be dedicated as yourself. Your charming volumes upon the antiquities of that City have indissolubly connected your name with its earlier—(as your residence in the vicinity has identified you with its more recent)—associations.

Ere you receive these volumes, I hope to be deep in the perusal of your forthcoming work upon "the Topography of Rome and its Vicinity." The glance at its contents which you permitted me at Naples sufficed to convince me of its interest and value; and, as an Englishman, and as one who has loitered under the Portico, I rejoice to think that, in adding largely to your own reputation, you will also renovate our country's claim to eminence in those departments of learning in which of late years we have but feebly supported our ancient reputation. Venturing thus a prediction of the success of your work, it would be a little superfluous to express a wish for the accomplishment of the prophecy! But I may add a more general hope, that you will long have leisure and inclination for those literary pursuits to which you bring an erudition so extensive;—and that they may continue, as now, sometimes to beguile you from yourself, and never to divert you from your friends.

I have the honor to be
Dear Sir,
Very faithfully yours,
THE AUTHOR.

LEAMINGTON,
September 21, 1834.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1834.

On visiting those disinterred remains of an ancient City, which, more perhaps than either the delicious breeze or the cloudless sun, the violet valleys and orange groves of the South, attract the traveller to the neighborhood of Naples; on viewing, still fresh and vivid, the houses, the streets, the temples, the theatres of a place existing in the haughtiest age of the Roman empire—it was not unnatural, perhaps, that a writer who had before labored, however unworthily, in the art to revive and to create, should feel a keen desire to people once more those deserted streets, to repair those graceful ruins, to reanimate the bones which were yet spared to his survey; to traverse the gulf of eighteen centuries, and to wake to a second existence—the City of the Dead!

And the reader will easily imagine how sensibly this desire grew upon one whose task was undertaken in the immediate neighborhood of Pompeii—the sea that once bore her commerce, and received her fugitives, at his feet—and the fatal mountain of Vesuvius, still breathing forth smoke and fire, constantly before his eyes!*

I was aware from the first, however, of the great difficulties with which I had to contend. To paint the manners, and exhibit the life, of the Middle Ages, required the hand of a master genius; yet, perhaps, that task was slight and easy, in comparison with the attempt to portray a far earlier and more unfamiliar period. With the men and customs of the feudal time we have a natural sympathy and bond of alliance; those men were our own ancestors—from those customs we received our own—the creed of our chivalric

* Nearly the whole of this work was written at Naples last winter (1832–3).

fathers is still ours—their tombs yet consecrate our churches—the ruins of their castles yet frown over our valleys. We trace in their struggles for liberty and for justice our present institutions; and in the elements of their social state we behold the origin of our own.

But with the classical age we have no household and familiar associations. The creed of that departed religion, the customs of that past civilization, present little that is sacred or attractive to our northern imaginations; they are rendered yet more trite to us by the scholastic pedantries which first acquainted us with their nature, and are linked with the recollection of studies which were imposed as a labor, and not cultivated as a delight.

Yet the enterprise, though arduous, seemed to me worth attempting; and in the time and the scene I have chosen, much may be found to arouse the curiosity of the reader, and enlist his interest in the descriptions of the author. It was the first century of our religion; it was the most civilized period of Rome; the conduct of the story lies amidst places whose relics we yet trace; the catastrophe is among the most awful which the tragedies of Ancient History present to our survey.

From the ample materials before me, my endeavor has been to select those which would be most attractive to a modern reader;—the customs and superstitions least unfamiliar to him—the shadows that, when reanimated, would present to him such images as, while they represented the past, might be least uninteresting to the speculations of the present. It did, indeed, require a greater self-control than the reader may at first imagine, to reject much that was most inviting in itself; but which, while it might have added attraction to parts of the work, would have been injurious to the symmetry of the whole. Thus, for instance, the date of my story is that of the short reign of Titus, when Rome was at its proudest and most gigantic eminence of luxury and power. It was, therefore, a most inviting temptation to the Author, to conduct the characters of his tale, during the progress of its incidents, from Pompeii to Rome. What could afford such materials for description, or such field for the vanity of display, as that gorgeous city of the world, whose grandeur could lend so bright an inspiration to fancy—so favorable and so solemn a dignity to research? But, in choosing for my subject—my catastrophe, the Destruction of Pompeii, it required but little insight into the higher principles of art to perceive that to Pompeii the story should be rigidly confined.

Placed in contrast with the mighty pomp of Rome, the luxuries and gaud of the vivid Campanian city would have sunk into insignificance. Her awful fate would have seemed but a petty and isolated wreck in the vast seas of the imperial sway; and the auxiliary I should have summoned to the interest of my story, would only have destroyed and overpowered the cause it was invoked to support. I was therefore compelled to relinquish an episodical excursion so alluring in itself, and, confining my story strictly to Pompeii, to leave to others the honor of delineating the hollow but majestic civilization of Rome.

The city, whose fate supplied me with so superb and awful a catastrophe, supplied easily, from the first survey of its remains, the characters most suited to the subject and the scene: the half Grecian colony of Hercules, mingling with the manners of Italy so much of the costumes of Hellas, suggested of itself the characters of Glaucus and Ione. The worship of Isis, its existent fane, with its false oracles unveiled—the trade of Pompeii with Alexandria—the associations of the Sarnus with the Nile,—called forth the Egyptian Arbaces, the base Calenus, and the fervent Apæcides. The early struggles of Christianity with the heathen superstition suggested the creation of Olinthus; and the burnt fields of Campania, long celebrated for the spells of the sorceress, naturally produced the Saga of Vesuvius. For the existence of the Blind Girl, I am indebted to a casual conversation with a gentleman, well known amongst the English at Naples for his general knowledge of the many paths of life. Speaking of the utter darkness which accompanied the first recorded eruption of Vesuvius, and the additional obstacle it presented to the escape of the inhabitants, he observed that the blind would be the most favored in such a moment, and find the

easiest deliverance. In this remark originated the creation of Nydia.

The characters, therefore, are the natural offspring of the scene and time. The incidents of the tale are equally consonant, perhaps, to the then existent society; for it is not only the ordinary habits of life, the feasts and the forum, the baths and the amphitheatre, the common-place routine of the classic luxury, which we recall the past to behold;—equally important, and more deeply interesting, are the passions, the crimes, the misfortunes, and reverses that might have chanced to the shades we thus summon to life! We understand any epoch of the world but ill, if we do not examine its romance. There is as much truth in the poetry of life as in its prose.

As the greatest difficulty in treating of an unfamiliar and distant period is to make the characters introduced "live and move" before the eye of the reader, so such should doubtless be the first object of a work of the present description; and all attempts at the display of learning should be considered but as means subservient to this, the main requisite of fiction. The first art of the Poet (the Creator) is to breathe the breath of life into his creatures—the next is to make their words and actions appropriate to the era in which they are to speak and act. This last art is, perhaps, the better effected by not bringing the art itself constantly before the reader—by not crowding the page with quotations, and the margin with notes. The intuitive spirit which infuses antiquity into ancient images, is, perhaps, the true learning which a work of this nature requires; without it, pedantry is offensive—with it, useless. No man who is thoroughly aware of what Prose Fiction has now become—of its dignity, of its influence, of the manner in which it has gradually absorbed all similar departments of literature, of its power in teaching as well as amusing—can so far forget its connection with History, with Philosophy, with Politics—its utter harmony with Poetry and obedience to Truth—as to debase its nature to the level of scholastic frivolities: he raises scholarship to the creative, and does not bow the creative to the scholastic.

With respect to the language used by the characters introduced, I have studied carefully to avoid what has always seemed to me a fatal error in those who have attempted, in modern times, to introduce the beings of a classical age.* Authors have mostly given to them the stilted sentences, the cold and didactic solemnities of language which they find in the more admired of the classical writers. It is an error as absurd to make Romans in common life talk in the periods of Cicero, as it would be in a novelist to endow his English personages with the long-drawn sentences of Johnson or Burke. The fault is the greater, because while it pretends to learning, it betrays in reality the ignorance of just criticism—it fatigues, it wearies, it revolts—and we have not the satisfaction, in yawning, to think that we yawn eruditely. To impart any thing like fidelity to the dialogues of classic actors, we must beware (to use a university phrase) how we "*cram*" for

* What the strong common sense of Sir Walter Scott has expressed so well in his Preface to *Ivanhoe* (1st edition) appears to me, at least, as applicable to a writer who draws from classical as to one who borrows from feudal antiquity. Let me avail myself of the words I refer to, and humbly and reverently appropriate them for the moment:—"It is true that I neither can, nor do pretend, to the observation [observance?] of complete accuracy even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon, or in Norman-French [*in Latin or in Greek*], and which prohibits my sending forth this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde [*written with a reed upon five rolls of parchment, fastened to a cylinder, and adorned with a boss*], prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period to which my story is laid. It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, *translated* into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in.

* * * * *

"In point of justice, therefore, to the multitudes who will, I trust, devour this book with avidity [*hem!*], I have so far explained ancient manners in modern language, and so far detailed the characters and sentiments of my persons, that the modern reader will not find himself, I should hope, much trammelled by the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity. In this, I respectfully contend, I have in no respect exceeded the fair license due to the author of a fictitious composition.

* * * * *

"It is true," proceeds my authority, "that this license is confined within legitimate bounds; the author must introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age."—*Preface to Ivanhoe.*

I can add nothing to these judicious and discriminating remarks: they form the canons of true criticism, by which all fiction that portrays the past should be judged.

the occasion! Nothing can give to a writer a more stiff and uneasy gait than the sudden and hasty adoption of the toga. We must bring to our task the familiarized knowledge of many years; the allusions, the phraseology, the language generally, must flow from a stream that has long been full; the flowers must be transplanted from a living soil, and not bought second-hand at the nearest market-place. This advantage—which is, in fact, only that of familiarity with our subject—is one derived rather from accident than merit, and depends upon the degree in which the classics have entered into the education of our youth and the studies of our maturity. Yet, even did a writer possess the utmost advantage of this nature which education and study can bestow, it might be scarcely possible so entirely to transport himself to an age so different from his own, but that he would incur some inaccuracies, some errors of inadvertence or forgetfulness. And when, in works upon the manners of the Ancients—works even of the gravest character, composed by the profoundest scholars—some such imperfections will often be discovered, even by a critic in comparison but superficially informed, it would be far too presumptuous in me to hope that I have been more fortunate than men infinitely more learned, in a work in which learning is infinitely less required. It is for this reason that I venture to believe that scholars themselves will be the most lenient of my judges. Enough if this book, whatever its imperfections, should be found a portrait—unskilful, perhaps, in coloring, faulty in drawing, but not altogether unfaithful to the features and the costume of the age which I have attempted to paint. May it be (what is far more important) a just representation of the human passions and the human heart, whose elements in all ages are the same!

PREFACE

TO THE PRESENT EDITION, 1850.

This work has had the good fortune to be so general a favorite with the Public, that the Author is spared the task of obtruding any comments in its vindication from adverse criticism. The profound scholarship of German criticism, which has given so minute an attention to the domestic life of the ancients, has sufficiently testified to the general fidelity with which the manners, habits, and customs, of the inhabitants of Pompeii have been described in these pages. And writing the work almost on the spot, and amidst a population that still preserve a strong family likeness to their classic forefathers, I could scarcely fail to catch something of those living colors which mere book-study alone would not have sufficed to bestow; it is, I suspect, to this accidental advantage that this work is principally indebted for a greater popularity than has hitherto attended the attempts of scholars to create an interest, by fictitious narrative, in the manners and persons of a classic age. Perhaps, too, the writers I allude to, and of whose labors I would speak with the highest respect, did not sufficiently remember, that in works of imagination, the description of manners, however important as an accessary, must still be subordinate to the vital elements of interest, viz., plot, character, and passion. And, in reviving the ancient shadows, they have rather sought occasion to display erudition, than to show how the human heart beats the same, whether under the Grecian tunic or the Roman toga. It is this, indeed, which distinguishes the imitators of classic learning from the classic literature itself. For, in classic literature, there is no want of movement and passion—of all the more animated elements of what we now call Romance. Indeed, romance itself, as we take it from the middle ages, owes much to Grecian fable. Many of the adventures of knight-errantry are borrowed either from the trials of Ulysses, or the achievements of Theseus. And while Homer, yet unrestored to his throne among the poets, was only known to the literature of early chivalry, in a spurious or grotesque form—the genius of Gothic fiction was constructing many a tale for Northern wonder from the mutilated fragments of the divine old tale-teller.

Amongst those losses of the past which we have most to deplore are the old novels or romances for which Miletus was famous. But judging from all else of Greek literature

that is left to us, there can be little doubt that they were well fitted to sustain the attention of lively and impatient audiences by the same arts which are necessary to the modern tale-teller; that they could not have failed in variety of incident and surprises of ingenious fancy; in the contrasts of character; and, least of all, in the delineations of the tender passion, which, however modified in its expression by differences of national habits, forms the main subject of human interest, in all the multiform varieties of fictitious narrative—from the Chinese to the Arab—from the Arab to the Scandinavian—and which, at this day, animates the tale of many an itinerant Boccaccio, gathering his spell-bound listeners round him, on sunny evenings, by the Sicilian seas.

BOOK THE FIRST.

"Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere; et
Quem Fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro
Adpono; nec dulces amores
Sperne, puer, neque tu choreas."
HOR. lib. i. od. ix.

The future in the morrow shun to seek;
Each day that Fate shall give thee count as gain;—
Nor spurn, O youth, sweet loves,
Nor choral dance, and song.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF POMPEII.

"Ho, Diomed, well met! Do you sup with Glaucus to-night?" said a young man of small stature, who wore his tunic in those loose and effeminate folds which proved him to be a gentleman and a coxcomb.

"Alas, no! dear Clodius; he has not invited me," replied Diomed, a man of portly frame and of middle age. "By Pollux, a scurvy trick! for they say his suppers are the best in Pompeii."

"Pretty well — though there is never enough of wine for me. It is not the old Greek blood that flows in his veins, for he pretends that wine makes him dull the next morning."

"There may be another reason for that thrift," said Diomed, raising his brows. "With all his conceit and extravagance he is not so rich, I fancy, as he affects to be, and perhaps loves to save his amphoræ better than his wit."

"An additional reason for supping with him while the sesterces last. Next year, Diomed, we must find another Glaucus."

"He is fond of the dice, too, I hear."

"He is fond of every pleasure; and while he likes the pleasure of giving suppers, we are all fond of *him*."

"Ha, ha, Clodius, that is well said! Have you ever seen my wine-cellars, by the by?"

"I think not, my good Diomed."

"Well, you must sup with me some evening; I have tolerable murænæ* in my reservoir, and I will ask Pansa the ædile to meet you."

"Oh, no state with me!—*Persicos odi apparatus*, I am easily contented. Well, the day wanes; I am for the baths—and you—?"

"To the quæstor—business of state—afterwards to the temple of Isis. *Vale!*"

"An ostentatious, bustling, ill-bred fellow," muttered Clodius to himself, as he sauntered slowly away. "He thinks with his feasts and his wine-cellars to make us forget that he is the son of a freedman;—and so we will, when we do him the honor of winning his money: these rich plebeians are a harvest for us spendthrift nobles."

Thus soliloquizing, Clodius arrived in the Via Domitiana, which was crowded with pas-

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* *Murænæ*—lampreys.

sengers and chariots, and exhibited all that gay and animated exuberance of life and motion which we find at this day in the streets of Naples.

The bells of the cars as they rapidly glided by each other jingled merrily on the ear, and Clodius with smiles or nods claimed familiar acquaintance with whatever equipage was most elegant or fantastic: in fact, no idler was better known in Pompeii.

"What, Clodius! and how have you slept on your good fortune?" cried, in a pleasant and musical voice, a young man, in a chariot of the most fastidious and graceful fashion. Upon its surface of bronze were elaborately wrought, in the still exquisite workmanship of Greece, reliefs of the Olympian games: the two horses that drew the car were of the rarest breed of Parthia; their slender limbs seemed to disdain the ground and court the air, and yet at the slightest touch of the charioteer, who stood behind the young owner of the equipage, they paused motionless, as if suddenly transformed into stone—lifeless, but lifelike, as one of the breathing wonders of Praxiteles. The owner himself was of that slender and beautiful symmetry from which the sculptors of Athens drew their models; his Grecian origin betrayed itself in his light but clustering locks, and the perfect harmony of his features. He wore no toga, which in the time of the emperors had indeed ceased to be the general distinction of the Romans, and was especially ridiculed by the pretenders to fashion; but his tunic glowed in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye, and the fibulæ, or buckles, by which it was fastened, sparkled with emeralds: around his neck was a chain of gold, which in the middle of his breast twisted itself into the form of a serpent's head, from the mouth of which hung pendent a large signet ring of elaborate and most exquisite workmanship; the sleeves of the tunic were loose, and fringed at the hand with gold: and across the waist a girdle wrought in arabesque designs, and of the same material as the fringe, served in lieu of pockets for the receptacle of the handkerchief and the purse, the stilus and the tablets.

"My dear Glaucus!" said Clodius, "I rejoice to see that your losses have so little affected your mien. Why you seem as if you had been inspired by Apollo, and your face shines with happiness like a glory; any one might take you for the winner and me for the loser."

"And what is there in the loss or gain of those dull pieces of metal that should change our spirit, my Clodius? By Venus, while, yet young, we can cover our full locks with chaplets—while yet the cithara sounds on unsated ears—while yet the smile of Lydia or of Chloe flashes over our veins in which the blood runs so swiftly, so long shall we find delight in the sunny air, and make bald time itself but the treasurer of our joys. You sup with me to-night, you know."

"Who ever forgets the invitation of Glaucus!"

"But which way go you now?"

"Why, I thought of visiting the baths: but it wants yet an hour to the usual time."

"Well, I will dismiss my chariot, and go with you. So so, my Phylias," stroking the horse nearest to him, which by a low neigh and with backward ears playfully acknowledged the courtesy; "a holiday for you to-day. Is he not handsome, Clodius?"

"Worthy of Phœbus," returned the noble parasite,—"or of Glaucus."

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL, AND THE BEAUTY OF FASHION.—THE ATHENIAN'S CONFESSION.—THE READER'S INTRODUCTION TO ARBACES OF EGYPT.

Talking lightly on a thousand matters, the two young men sauntered through the streets: they were now in that quarter which was filled with the gayest shops, their open interiors all and each radiant with the gaudy yet harmonious colors of frescoes, inconceivably varied in fancy and design. The sparkling fountains, that at every vista threw upwards their grateful spray in the summer air; the crowd of passengers, or rather loiterers, mostly clad in robes of the Tyrian dye; the gay groups collected round each more attractive shop; the slaves passing to and fro with buckets of bronze, cast in the most graceful shapes, and borne upon their heads; the country girls stationed at frequent inter-

vals with baskets of blushing fruit, and flowers more alluring to the ancient Italians than to their descendants (with whom, indeed, "*latet anguis in herba*," a disease seems lurking in every violet and rose),* the numerous haunts which fulfilled with that idle people the office of cafés and clubs at this day; the shops, where on shelves of marble were ranged the vases of wine and oil, and before whose thresholds, seats, protected from the sun by a purple awning, invited the weary to rest and the indolent to lounge—made a scene of such glowing and vivacious excitement, as might well give the Athenian spirit of Glaucus an excuse for its susceptibility to joy.

"Talk to me no more of Rome," said he to Clodius. "Pleasure is too stately and ponderous in those mighty walls: even in the precincts of the court—even in the Golden House of Nero, and the incipient glories of the palace of Titus, there is a certain dulness of magnificence—the eye aches—the spirit is wearied; besides, my Clodius, we are discontented when we compare the enormous luxury and wealth of others with the mediocrity of our own state. But here we surrender ourselves easily to pleasure, and we have the brilliancy of luxury without the lassitude of its pomp."

"It was from that feeling that you chose your summer retreat at Pompeii?"

"It was. I prefer it to Baiæ: I grant the charms of the latter, but I love not the pedants who resort there, and who seem to weigh out their pleasures by the drachm."

"Yet you are fond of the learned, too; and as for poetry, why your house is literally eloquent with Æschylus and Homer, the epic and the drama."

"Yes, but those Romans who mimic my Athenian ancestors do everything so heavily. Even in the chase they make their slaves carry Plato with them; and whenever the boar is lost, out they take their books and their papyrus, in order not to lose their time too. When the dancing girls swim before them in all the blandishment of Persian manners, some drone of a freedman, with a face of stone, reads them a section of Cicero *De Officiis*. Unskilful pharmacists! pleasure and study are not elements to be thus mixed together—they must be enjoyed separately: the Romans lose both by this pragmatical affectation of refinement, and prove that they have no souls for either. Oh, my Clodius, how little your countrymen know of the true versatility of a Pericles, of the true witcheries of an Aspasia! It was but the other day that I paid a visit to Pliny: he was sitting in his summer-house writing, while an unfortunate slave played on the tibia. His nephew (oh, whip me such philosophical coxcombs!) was reading Thucydides' description of the plague, and nodding his conceited little head in time to the music, while his lips were repeating all the loathsome details of that terrible delineation. The puppy saw nothing incongruous in learning at the same time a ditty of love and a description of the plague."

"Why they *are* much the same thing," said Clodius.

"So I told him, in excuse for his coxcombry;—but my youth stared me rebukingly in the face, without taking the jest, and answered, that it was only the insensate ear that the music pleased, whereas the book (the description of the plague, mind you!) elevated the heart. 'Ah!' quoth the fat uncle, wheezing, 'my boy is quite an Athenian, always mixing the *utile* with the *dulce*.' O Minerva, how I laughed in my sleeve! While I was there, they came to tell the boy-sophist that his favorite freedman was just dead of a fever. 'Inexorable death!' cried he;—'get me my Horace. How beautifully the sweet poet consoles us for these misfortunes!' Oh, can these men love, my Clodius? Scarcely even with the senses. How rarely a Roman has a heart! He is but the mechanism of genius—he wants its bones and flesh."

Though Clodius was secretly a little sore at these remarks on his countrymen, he affected to sympathize with his friend, partly because he was by nature a parasite, and partly because it was the fashion among the dissolute young Romans to affect a little contempt for the very birth which, in reality, made them so arrogant; it was the mode to imitate the Greeks, and yet to laugh at their own clumsy imitation.

Thus conversing, their steps were arrested by a crowd gathered round an open space

* See note (*a*) at the end.

where three streets met; and, just where the porticos of a light and graceful temple threw their shade, there stood a young girl, with a flower-basket on her right arm, and a small three-stringed instrument of music in the left hand, to whose low and soft tones she was modulating a wild and half-barbaric air. At every pause in the music she gracefully waved her flower-basket round, inviting the loiterers to buy; and many a sesterce was showered into the basket, either in compliment to the music or in compassion to the songstress—for she was blind.

"It is my poor Thessalian," said Glaucus, stopping; "I have not seen her since my return to Pompeii. Hush! her voice is sweet; let us listen."

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL'S SONG.

I.

"Buy my flowers—O buy—I pray!
The blind girl comes from afar;
If the earth be as fair as I hear them say,
These flowers her children are!
Do they her beauty keep?
They are fresh from her lap, I know;
For I caught them fast asleep
In her arms an hour ago,
With the air which is her breath—
Her soft and delicate breath—
Over them murmuring low!

On their lips her sweet kiss lingers yet,
And their cheeks with her tender tears are wet.
For she weeps—that gentle mother weeps—
(As morn and night her watch she keeps,
With a yearning heart and a passionate care)—
To see the young things grow so fair;—
She weeps—for love she weeps;
And the dews are the tears she weeps,
From the well of a mother's love!

II.

Ye have a world of light,
Where love in the loved rejoices;
But the blind girl's home is the House of Night,
And its beings are empty voices.

As one in the realm below,
I stand by the streams of woe!
I hear the vain shadows glide,
I feel their soft breath at my side,
And I thirst the loved forms to see,
And I stretch my fond arms around,
And I catch but a shapeless sound,
For the living are ghosts to me.

Come buy—come buy!—
Hark! how the sweet things sigh
(For they have a voice like ours),
'The breath of the blind girl closes
The leaves of the saddening roses—
We are tender, we sons of light,
We shrink from this child of night;
From the grasp of the blind girl free us;
We yearn for the eyes that see us—
We are for night too gay,
In your eyes we behold the day—
O buy—O buy the flowers!'"

"I must have yon bunch of violets, sweet Nydia," said Glaucus, pressing through the crowd, and dropping a handful of small coins into the basket; "your voice is more charming than ever."

The blind girl started forward as she heard the Athenian's voice; then as suddenly paused, while the blood rushed violently over neck, cheek, and temples.

"So you are returned!" said she, in a low voice; and then repeated, half to herself, "Glaucus is returned!"

"Yes, child, I have not been at Pompeii above a few days. My garden wants your care, as before; you will visit it, I trust, tomorrow. And mind, no garlands at my house shall be woven by any hands but those of the pretty Nydia."

Nydia smiled joyously, but did not answer; and Glaucus, placing in his breast the violets he had selected, turned gaily and carelessly from the crowd.

"So, she is a sort of client of yours, this child?" said Clodius.

"Ay—does she not sing prettily? She interests me, the poor slave! Besides, she is from the land of the Gods' hill—Olympus frowned upon her cradle—she is of Thessaly."

"The witches' country."

"True; but for my part I find every woman a witch; and at Pompeii, by Venus! the very air seems to have taken a love-philtre, so handsome does every face without a beard seem in my eyes."

"And lo! one of the handsomest in Pompeii, old Diomed's daughter the rich Julia!" said Clodius, as a young lady, her face covered by her veil, and attended by two female slaves, approached them, in her way to the baths.

"Fair Julia, we salute thee!" said Clodius.

Julia partially raised her veil, so as with some coquetry to display a bold Roman profile, a full dark bright eye, and a cheek over whose natural olive art shed a fairer and softer rose.

"And Glaucus, too, is returned!" said she, glancing meaningly at the Athenian. "Has he forgotten," she added, in a half-whisper, "his friends of the last year?"

"Beautiful Julia! even Lethe itself, if it disappear in one part of the earth, rises again in another. Jupiter does not allow us ever to forget for more than a moment; but Venus, more harsh still, vouchsafes not even a moment's oblivion."

"Glaucus is never at a loss for fair words."

"Who is when the object of them is so fair?"

"We shall see you both at my father's villa soon," said Julia, turning to Clodius.

"We will mark the day in which we visit you with a white stone," answered the gamester.

Julia dropped her veil, but slowly, so that her last glance rested on the Athenian with affected timidity and real boldness; the glance bespoke tenderness and reproach.

The friends passed on.

"Julia is certainly handsome," said Glaucus.

"And last year you would have made that confession in a warmer tone."

"True: I was dazzled at the first sight, and mistook for a gem that which was but an artful imitation."

"Nay," returned Clodius, "all women are the same at heart. Happy he who weds a handsome face and a large dower. What more can he desire?"

Glaucus sighed.

They were now in a street less crowded than the rest, at the end of which they beheld that broad and most lovely sea, which upon those delicious coasts seems to have renounced its prerogative of terror,—so soft are the crisping winds that hover around its bosom, so glowing and so various are the hues which it takes from the rosy clouds, so fragrant are the perfumes which the breezes from the land scatter over its depths. From such a sea might you well believe that Aphrodité rose to take the empire of the earth.

"It is still early for the bath," said the Greek, who was the creature of every poetical impulse; "let us wander from the crowded city, and look upon the sea while the noon yet laughs along its billows."

"With all my heart," said Clodius; "and the bay, too, is always the most animated part of the city."

Pompeii was the miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus—in the energy yet corruption, in the refinement yet the vice, of its people, you beheld a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a showbox, in which the gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the great monarchy of earth, and which they afterwards hid from time, to give to the wonder of posterity;—the moral of the maxim, that under the sun there is nothing new.

Crowded in the glassy bay were the vessels of commerce and the gilded galleys for the pleasures of the rich citizens. The boats of the fishermen glided rapidly to and fro; and afar off you saw the tall masts of the fleet under the command of Pliny. Upon the shore sat a Sicilian, who, with vehement gestures and flexile features, was narrating to a group of fishermen and peasants a strange tale of shipwrecked mariners and friendly dolphins:—just as at this day, in the modern neighborhood, you may hear upon the Mole of Naples.

Drawing his comrade from the crowd, the Greek bent his steps toward a solitary part of the beach, and the two friends, seated on a small crag which rose amidst the smooth pebbles, inhaled the voluptuous and cooling breeze, which, dancing over the waters, kept music with its invisible feet. There was, perhaps, something in the scene that invited them to silence and reverie. Clodius, shading his eyes from the burning sky, was calculating the gains of the last week; and the Greek, leaning upon his hand, and shrinking not from that sun,—his nation's tutelary deity,—with whose fluent light of poesy, and joy, and love, his own veins were filled, gazed upon the broad expanse, and envied, perhaps, every wind that bent its pinions towards the shores of Greece.

"Tell me, Clodius," said the Greek at last, "hast thou ever been in love?"

"Yes, very often."

"He who has loved often," answered Glaucus, "has loved never. There is but one Eros, though there are many counterfeits of him."

"The counterfeits are not bad little gods, upon the whole," answered Clodius.

"I agree with you," returned the Greek. "I adore even the shadow of Love; but I adore himself yet more."

"Art thou, then, soberly and earnestly in love? Hast thou that feeling which the poets describe—a feeling that makes us neglect our suppers, forswear the theatre, and write elegies? I should never have thought it. You dissemble well."

"I am not far gone enough for that," returned Glaucus, smiling; "or rather I say with Tibullus,—

'He whom love rules, where'er his path may be,
Walks safe and sacred.'

In fact, I am not in love; but I could be if there were but occasion to see the object. Eros would light his torch, but the priests have given him no oil."

"Shall I guess the object?—Is it not Diomed's daughter? She adores you, and does not affect to conceal it; and, by Hercules, I say again and again, she is both handsome and rich. She will bind the door-posts of her husband with golden fillets."

"No, I do not desire to sell myself. Diomed's daughter is handsome, I grant; and at one time, had she not been the grandchild of a freedman, I might have——Yet no—she carries all her beauty in her face; her manners are not maidenlike, and her mind knows no culture save that of pleasure."

"You are ungrateful. Tell me, then, who is the fortunate virgin?"

"You shall hear, my Clodius. Several months ago I was sojourning at Neapolis,* a city utterly to my own heart, for it still retains the manners and stamp of its Grecian origin,—and it yet merits the name of Parthenope, from its delicious air and its beautiful shores. One day I entered the temple of Minerva, to offer up my prayers, not for myself more than for the city on which Pallas smiles no longer. The temple was empty and deserted. The recollections of Athens crowded fast and meltingly upon me: imagining myself still alone in the temple, and absorbed in the earnestness of my devotion, my prayer gushed from my heart to my lips, and I wept as I prayed. I was startled in the midst of my devotions, however, by a deep sigh; I turned suddenly round, and just behind me was a female. She had raised her veil also in prayer; and when our eyes met, methought a celestial ray shot from those dark and shining orbs at once into my soul. Never, my Clodius, have I seen mortal face more exquisitely moulded: a certain melancholy softened and yet elevated its expression; that unutterable something which springs from the soul, and which our sculptors have imparted to the aspect of Psyche, gave her beauty I know not what of divine and noble; tears were rolling down her eyes. I guessed at once that she was also of Athenian lineage; and that in my prayer for Athens her heart had responded to mine. I spoke to her, though with a faultering voice—'Art thou not, too, Athenian?' said I, 'O beautiful virgin!' At the sound of my voice she blushed, and half drew her veil across her face.—'My forefathers' ashes,' said she, 'repose by the waters of Ilyssus: my birth is of Neapolis; but my heart, as my lineage, is Athenian.'—'Let us, then,' said I, 'make our offerings together;' and, as the priest now appeared, we stood side by side, while we followed the priest in his ceremonial prayer; together we touched the knees of the goddess—together we laid our olive garlands on the altar. I felt a strange emotion of almost sacred tenderness at this companionship. We, strangers from a far and fallen land, stood together and alone in that temple of our country's deity: was it not natural that my heart should yearn to my countrywoman, for so I might surely call her? I felt as if I had known her for years; and that simple rite seemed, as by a miracle, to operate on the sympathies and ties of time. Silently we left the temple, and I was about to ask her where she dwelt, and if I might be permitted to visit her, when a youth, in whose features there was some kindred resemblance to her own, and who stood upon the steps of the fane, took her by the hand. She turned round and bade me farewell. The crowd separated us; I saw her no more. On reaching my home I found letters, which

* Naples.

obliged me to set out for Athens, for my relations threatened me with litigation concerning my inheritance. When that suit was happily over, I repaired once more to Neapolis; I instituted inquiries throughout the whole city, I could discover no clue of my lost countrywoman, and, hoping to lose in gaiety all remembrance of that beautiful apparition, I hastened to plunge myself amidst the luxuries of Pompeii. This is all my history. I do not love; but I remember and regret."

As Clodius was about to reply, a slow and stately step approached them, and at the sound it made amongst the pebbles, each turned, and each recognized the newcomer.

It was a man who had scarcely reached his fortieth year, of tall stature, and of a thin but nervous and sinewy frame. His skin, dark and bronzed, betrayed his Eastern origin; and his features had something Greek in their outline (especially in the chin, the lip, and the brow), save that the nose was somewhat raised and aquiline; and the bones, hard and visible, forbade that fleshy and waving contour which on the Grecian physiognomy preserved even in manhood the round and beautiful curves of youth. His eyes, large and black as the deepest night, shone with no varying and uncertain lustre. A deep, thoughtful, and half melancholy calm, seemed unalterably fixed in their majestic and commanding gaze. His step and mien were peculiarly sedate and lofty, and something foreign in the fashion and the sober hues of his sweeping garments added to the impressive effect of his quiet countenance and stately form. Each of the young men, in saluting the new-comer, made mechanically, and with care to conceal it from him, a slight gesture or sign with their fingers; for Arbaces, the Egyptian, was supposed to possess the fatal gift of the evil eye.

"The scene must, indeed, be beautiful," said Arbaces, with a cold though courteous smile, "which draws the gay Clodius, and Glaucus, the all-admired, from the crowded thoroughfares of the city."

"Is Nature ordinarily so unattractive?" asked the Greek.

"To the dissipated—yes."

"An austere reply, but scarcely a wise one. Pleasure delights in contrasts; it is from dissipation that we learn to enjoy solitude, and from solitude, dissipation."

"So think the young philosophers of the Garden," replied the Egyptian; "they mistake lassitude for meditation, and imagine that, because they are sated with others, they know the delight of loneliness. But not in such jaded bosoms can Nature awaken that enthusiasm which alone draws from her chaste reserve all her unspeakable beauty; she demands from you, not the exhaustion of passion, but all that fervor, from which you only seek, in adoring her, a release. When, young Athenian, the moon revealed herself in visions of light to Endymion, it was after a day passed, not amongst the feverish haunts of men, but on the still mountains and in the solitary valleys of the hunter."

"Beautiful simile!" cried Glaucus; "most unjust application! Exhaustion! that word is for age not youth. By me, at least, one moment of satiety has never been known!"

Again the Egyptian smiled, but his smile was cold and blighting, and even the unimaginative Clodius froze beneath its light. He did not, however, reply to the passionate exclamation of Glaucus; but, after a pause, he said, in a soft and melancholy voice,—

"After all, you do right to enjoy the hour while it smiles for you; the rose soon withers, the perfume soon exhales. And we, O Glaucus! strangers in the land, and far from our fathers' ashes, what is there left for us but pleasure or regret?—for you the first, perhaps for me the last."

The bright eyes of the Greek were suddenly suffused with tears. "Ah, speak not, Arbaces," he cried—"speak not of our ancestors. Let us forget that there were ever other liberties than those of Rome! And Glory!—oh, vainly would we call her ghost from the fields of Marathon and Thermopylæ!"

"Thy heart rebukes thee while thou speakest," said the Egyptian; "and in thy gaieties this night, thou wilt be more mindful of Leæna* than of Lais. *Vale!*"

* Leæna, the heroic mistress of Aristogiton, when put to the torture, bit out her tongue, that the pain might not induce her to betray the conspiracy against the sons of Pisistratus. The statue of a lioness, erected in her honor, was to be seen at Athens in the time of Pausanias.

Thus saying, he gathered his robe around him, and slowly swept away.

"I breathe more freely," said Clodius. "Imitating the Egyptians, we sometimes introduce a skeleton at our feasts. In truth, the presence of such an Egyptian as yon gliding shadow were spectre enough to sour the richest grape of the Falernian."

"Strange man!" said Glaucus, musingly; "yet, dead though he seem to pleasure, and cold to the objects of the world, scandal belies him, or his house and his heart could tell a different tale."

"Ah! there are whispers of other orgies than those of Osiris in his gloomy mansion. He is rich, too, they say. Can we not get him amongst us, and teach him the charms of dice? Pleasure of pleasures! hot fever of hope and fear! inexpressible unjaded passion! how fiercely beautiful thou art, O Gaming!"

"Inspired — inspired!" cried Glaucus, laughing; "the oracle speaks poetry in Clodius. What miracle next!"

CHAPTER III.

PARENTAGE OF GLAUCUS.—DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES OF POMPEII.—A CLASSIC REVEL.

HEAVEN had given to Glaucus every blessing but one: it had given him beauty, health, fortune, genius, illustrious descent, a heart of fire, a mind of poetry; but it had denied him the heritage of freedom. He was born in Athens, the subject of Rome. Succeeding early to an ample inheritance, he had indulged that inclination for travel so natural to the young, and had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught of pleasure amidst the gorgeous luxuries of the imperial court.

He was an Alcibiades without ambition. He was what a man of imagination, youth, fortune, and talents, readily becomes when you deprive him of the inspiration of glory. His house at Rome was the theme of the debauchees, but also of the lovers of art; and the sculptors of Greece delighted to task their skill in adorning the porticos and *exedra* of an Athenian. His retreat in Pompeii—alas! the colors are faded now, the walls stripped of their paintings!—its main beauty, its elaborate finish of grace and ornament, is gone;—yet when first given once more to the day, what eulogies, what wonder, did its minute and glowing decorations create—its paintings—its mosaics! Passionately enamored of poetry and the drama, which recalled to Glaucus the wit and the heroism of his race, that fairy mansion was adorned with representations of Æschylus and Homer. And antiquaries, who resolve taste to a trade, have turned the patron to the professor, and still (though the error is now acknowledged) they style in custom, as they first named in mistake, the disburied house of the Athenian Glaucus "THE HOUSE OF THE DRAMATIC POET."

Previous to our description of this house, it may be as well to convey to the reader a general notion of the houses of Pompeii, which he will find to resemble strongly the plans of Vitruvius; but with all those differences in detail, of caprice and taste, which, being natural to mankind, have always puzzled antiquaries. We shall endeavor to make this description as clear and unpedantic as possible.

You enter then, usually, by a small entrance-passage (called *vestibulum*), into a hall, sometimes with (but more frequently without) the ornament of columns; around three sides of this hall are doors communicating with several bed-chambers (among which is the porter's), the best of these being usually appropriated to country visitors. At the extremity of the hall, on either side to the right and left, if the house is large, there are two small recesses, rather than chambers, generally devoted to the ladies of the mansion; and in the centre of the tessellated pavement of the hall is invariably a square, shallow reservoir for rain-water (classically termed *impluvium*), which was admitted by an aperture in the roof above; the said aperture being covered at will by an awning. Near this impluvium, which had a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the ancients, were sometimes (but at Pompeii more rarely than at Rome) placed images of the household gods;—the hospitable hearth, often mentioned by the Roman poets, and consecrated to the Lares, was at Pompeii almost invariably formed by a moveable *brazier;* while in

some corner, often the most ostentatious place, was deposited a huge wooden chest, ornamented and strengthened by bands of bronze or iron, and secured by strong hooks upon a stone pedestal so firmly as to defy the attempts of any robber to detach it from its position. It is supposed that this chest was the money-box, or coffer, of the master of the house; though, as no money has been found in any of the chests discovered at Pompeii, it is probable that it was sometimes rather designed for ornament than use.

In this hall (or *atrium*, to speak classically) the clients and visitors of inferior rank were usually received. In the houses of the more "respectable," an *atriensis*, or slave peculiarly devoted to the service of the hall, was invariably retained, and his rank among his fellow-slaves was high and important. The reservoir in the centre must have been rather a dangerous ornament, but the centre of the hall was like the grass-plot of a college, and interdicted to the passers to and fro, who found ample space in the margin. Right opposite the entrance, at the other end of the hall, was an apartment (*tablinum*), in which the pavement was usually adorned with rich mosaics, and the walls covered with elaborate paintings. Here were usually kept the records of the family, or those of any public office that had been filled by the owner: on one side of this saloon, if we may so call it, was often a dining-room, or *triclinium;* on the other side, perhaps, what we should now term a cabinet of gems, containing whatever curiosities were deemed most rare and costly; and invariably a small passage for the slaves to cross to the further parts of the house, without passing the apartments thus mentioned. These rooms all opened on a square or oblong colonnade, technically termed peristyle. If the house was small, its boundary ceased with this colonnade; and in that case its centre, however diminutive, was ordinarily appropriated to the purpose of a garden, and adorned with vases of flowers, placed upon pedestals: while under the colonnade, to the right and left, were doors admitting to bed-rooms,* to a second *triclinium*, or eating-room (for the ancients generally appropriated two rooms at least to that purpose, one for summer, and one for winter—or, perhaps, one for ordinary, the other for festive, occasions); and if the owner affected letters, a cabinet, dignified by the name of library,—for a very small room was sufficient to contain the few rolls of papyrus which the ancients deemed a notable collection of books.

At the end of the peristyle was generally the kitchen. Supposing the house was large, it did not end with the peristyle, and the centre thereof was not in that case a garden, but might be, perhaps, adorned with a fountain, or basin for fish; and at its end, exactly opposite to the tablinum, was generally another eating-room, on either side of which were bed-rooms, and, perhaps, a picture saloon, or *pinacotheca.** These apartments communicated again with a square or oblong space, usually adorned on three sides with a colonnade like the peristyle, and very much resembling the peristyle, only usually longer. This was the proper *viridarium*, or garden, being commonly adorned with a fountain, or statues, and a profusion of gay flowers: at its extreme end was the gardener's house; on either side, beneath the colonnade, were sometimes, if the size of the family required it, additional rooms.

At Pompeii, a second or third story was rarely of importance, being built only above a small part of the house, and containing rooms for the slaves; differing in this respect from the more magnificent edifices of Rome, which generally contained the principal eating-room (or *cœnaculum*) on the second floor. The apartments themselves were ordinarily of small size; for in those delightful climes they received any extraordinary number of visitors in the peristyle (or portico), the hall, or the garden;—and even their banquet-rooms, however elaborately adorned and carefully selected in point of aspect, were of diminutive proportions; for the intellectual ancients, being fond of society, not of crowds, rarely feasted more than nine at a time, so that large dinner-rooms were not so necessary with them as with us.† But the suite of rooms seen

* The Romans had bed-rooms appropriated not only to the sleep of night, but also to the day siesta (*cubicula diurna*).

* In the stately palaces of Rome, this picture-room generally communicated with the atrium.

† When they entertained very large parties, the feast was usually served in the hall.

at once from the entrance, must have had a very imposing effect: you beheld at once the hall richly paved and painted—the tablinum—the graceful peristyle, and (if the house extended farther) the opposite banquet-room and the garden, which closed the view with some gushing fount or marble statue.

The reader will now have a tolerable notion of the Pompeian houses, which resembled in some respects the Grecian, but mostly the Roman fashion of domestic architecture. In almost every house there is some difference in detail from the rest, but the principal outline is the same in all. In all you find the hall, the tablinum, and the peristyle, communicating with each other; in all you find the walls richly painted; and in all the evidence of a people fond of the refining elegancies of life. The purity of the taste of the Pompeians in decoration is, however, questionable: they were fond of the gaudiest colors, of fantastic designs; they often painted the lower half of their columns a bright red, leaving the rest uncolored; and where the garden was small, its wall was frequently tinted to deceive the eye as to its extent, imitating trees, birds, temples, etc., in perspective—a meretricious delusion which the graceful pedantry of Pliny himself adopted, with a complacent pride in its ingenuity.

But the house of Glaucus was at once one of the smallest, and yet one of the most adorned and finished of all the private mansions of Pompeii: it would be a model at this day for the house of "a single man in Mayfair"—the envy and despair of the cœlibian purchasers of buhl and marquetry.

You enter by a long and narrow vestibule, on the floor of which is the image of a dog in mosaic, with the well-known "Cave canem,"—or "Beware the dog." On either side is a chamber of some size; for the interior part of the house not being large enough to contain the two great divisions of private and public apartments, these two rooms were set apart for the reception of visitors who neither by rank nor familiarity were entitled to admission in the penetralia of the mansion.

Advancing up the vestibule you enter an atrium, that when first discovered was rich in paintings, which *in point of expression* would scarcely disgrace a Raphael. You may see them now transplanted to the Neapolitan Museum; they are still the admiration of connoisseurs—they depict the parting of Achilles and Briseis. Who does not acknowledge the force, the vigor, the beauty, employed in delineating the forms and faces of Achilles and the immortal slave?

On one side the atrium, a small staircase admitted to the apartments for the slaves on the second floor; there also were two or three small bed-rooms, the walls of which portrayed the rape of Europa, the battle of the Amazons, etc.

You now enter the tablinum, across which, at either end, hung rich draperies of Tyrian purple, half withdrawn.* On the walls was depicted a poet reading his verses to his friends; and in the pavement was inserted a small and most exquisite mosaic, typical of the instructions given by the director of the stage to his comedians.

You passed through this saloon, and entered the peristyle; and here (as I have said before was usually the case with the smaller houses of Pompeii) the mansion ended. From each of the seven columns that adorned this court hung festoons of garlands; the centre, supplying the place of a garden, bloomed with the rarest flowers placed in vases of white marble, that were supported on pedestals. At the left hand of this small garden was a diminutive fane, resembling one of those small chapels placed at the side of roads in Catholic countries, and dedicated to the Penates; before it stood a bronze tripod: to the left of the colonnade were two small cubicula, or bed-rooms; to the right was the triclinium, in which the guests were now assembled.

This room is usually termed by the antiquaries of Naples "The Chamber of Leda;" and in the beautiful work of Sir William Gell, the reader will find an engraving from that most delicate and graceful painting of Leda presenting her new-born to her husband, from which the room derives its name. This charming apartment opened upon the fragrant garden. Round the table of citrean†

* The tablinum was also secured at pleasure by sliding-doors.

† The most valued wood—not the modern citron-tree. My learned friend, Mr. W. S. Landor, conjectures it with much plausibility to have been mahogany.

wood, highly polished and delicately wrought with silver arabesques, were placed the three couches, which were yet more common at Pompeii than the semicircular seat that had grown lately into fashion at Rome; and on these couches of bronze, studded with richer metals, were laid thick quiltings covered with elaborate broidery, and yielding luxuriously to the pressure.

"Well, I must own," said the ædile Pansa, "that your house, though scarcely larger than a case for one's fibulæ, is a gem of its kind. How beautifully painted is that parting of Achilles and Briseis!—what a style! —what heads!—what a—hem!"

"Praise from Pansa is indeed valuable on such subjects," said Clodius gravely. "Why, the paintings on *his* walls!—Ah! there is, indeed, the hand of a Zeuxis!"

"You flatter me, my Clodius; indeed you do;" quoth the ædile, who was celebrated through Pompeii for having the worst paintings in the world; for he was patriotic, and patronized none but Pompeians. "You flatter me: but there is something pretty—Ædepol, yes—in the colors, to say nothing of the design;—and then for the kitchen, my friends—ah! that was all my fancy."

"What is the design?" said Glaucus. "I have not yet seen your kitchen, though I have often witnessed the excellence of its cheer."

"A cook, my Athenian—a cook sacrificing the trophies of his skill on the altar of Vesta, with a beautiful muræna (taken from the life) on a spit at a distance;—there is some invention there!"

At that instant the slaves appeared, bearing a tray covered with the first preparative initia of the feast. Amidst delicious figs, fresh herbs strewed with snow, anchovies, and eggs, were ranged small cups of diluted wine sparingly mixed with honey. As these were placed on the table, young slaves bore round to each of the five guests (for there were no more) the silver basin of perfumed water and napkins edged with a purple fringe. But the ædile ostentatiously drew forth his own napkin, which was not, indeed, of so fine a linen, but in which the fringe was twice as broad, and wiped his hands with the parade of a man who felt he was calling for admiration.

"A splendid *mappa* that of yours," said Clodius; "why, the fringe is as broad as a girdle!"

"A trifle, my Clodius; a trifle! They tell me this stripe is the latest fashion at Rome: but Glaucus attends to these things more than I."

"Be propitious, O Bacchus!" said Glaucus, inclining reverentially to a beautiful image of the god placed in the centre of the table, at the corners of which stood the Lares and the salt-holders. The guests followed the prayer, and then, sprinkling the wine on the table, they performed the wonted libation.

This over, the convivialists reclined themselves on the couches, and the business of the hour commenced.

"May this cup be my last!" said the young Sallust, as the table, cleared of its first stimulants, was now loaded with the substantial part of the entertainment, and the ministering slave poured forth to him a brimming cyathus—"May this cup be my last, but it is the best wine I have drunk at Pompeii!"

"Bring hither the amphora," said Glaucus, "and read its date and its character."

The slave hastened to inform the party that the scroll fastened to the cork betokened its birth from Chios, and its age a ripe fifty years.

"How deliciously the snow has cooled it!" said Pansa. "It is just enough."

"It is like the experience of a man who has cooled his pleasures sufficiently to give them a double zest," exclaimed Sallust.

"It is like a woman's 'No,'" added Glaucus: "it cools, but to inflame the more."

"When is our next wild-beast fight?" said Clodius to Pansa.

"It stands fixed for the ninth ide of August," answered Pansa: "on the day after the Vulcanalia;—we have a most lovely young lion for the occasion."

"Whom shall we get for him to eat?" asked Clodius. "Alas! there is a great scarcity of criminals. You must positively find some innocent or other to condemn to the lion, Pansa!"

"Indeed I have thought very seriously about it of late," replied the ædile, gravely. "It was a most infamous law that which forbade us to send our own slaves to the wild

beasts. Not to let us do what we like with our own, that's what I call an infringement on property itself."

"Not so in the good old days of the Republic," sighed Sallust.

"And then this pretended mercy to the slaves is such a disappointment to the poor people. How they do love to see a good tough battle between a man and a lion; and all this innocent pleasure they may lose (if the gods don't send us a good criminal soon) from this cursed law!"

"What can be worse policy," said Clodius, sententiously, "than to interfere with the manly amusements of the people?"

"Well, thank Jupiter and the Fates! we have no Nero at present," said Sallust.

"He was, indeed, a tyrant; he shut up our amphitheatre for ten years."

"I wonder it did not create a rebellion," said Sallust.

"It very nearly did," returned Pansa, with his mouth full of wild boar.

Here the conversation was interrupted for a moment by a flourish of flutes, and two slaves entered with a single dish.

"Ah! what delicacy hast thou in store for us now, my Glaucus?" cried the young Sallust, with sparkling eyes.

Sallust was only twenty-four, but he had no pleasure in life like eating—perhaps he had exhausted all the others; yet had he some talent, and an excellent heart—as far as it went.

"I know its face, by Pollux!" cried Pansa. "It is an Ambracian Kid. Ho!" (snapping his fingers, an usual signal to the slaves,) "we must prepare a new libation in honor to the new-comer."

"I had hoped," said Glaucus, in a melancholy tone, "to have procured you some oysters from Britain; but the winds that were so cruel to Cæsar have forbid us the oysters."

"Are they in truth so delicious?" asked Lepidus, loosening to a yet more luxurious ease his ungirdled tunic.

"Why, in truth, I suspect it is the distance that gives the flavor; they want the richness of the Brundusium oyster. But at Rome no supper is complete without them."

"The poor Britons! There is some good in them after all," said Sallust. "They produce an oyster!"

"I wish they would produce us a gladiator," said the ædile, whose provident mind was musing over the wants of the amphitheatre.

"By Pallas!" cried Glaucus, as his favorite slave crowned his steaming locks with a new chaplet, "I love these wild spectacles well enough when beast fights beast; but when a man, one with bones and blood like ours, is coldly put on the arena, and torn limb from limb, the interest is too horrid: I sicken—I gasp for breath—I long to rush and defend him. The yells of the populace seem to me more dire than the voices of the Furies chasing Orestes. I rejoice that there is so little chance of that bloody exhibition for our next show!"

The ædile shrugged his shoulders. The young Sallust, who was thought the best-natured man in Pompeii, stared in surprise. The graceful Lepidus, who rarely spoke for fear of disturbing his features, ejaculated "Hercle!" The parasite Clodius muttered "Ædepol!" and the sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius,* and whose duty it was to echo his richer friend, when he could not praise him,—the parasite of a parasite,—muttered also "Ædepol!"

"Well, you Italians are used to these spectacles, we Greeks are more merciful. Ah, shade of Pindar!—the rapture of a true Grecian game—the emulation of man against man—the generous strife—the half-mournful triumph—so proud to contend with a noble foe, so sad to see him overcome! But ye understand me not."

"The kid is excellent," said Sallust.

The slave, whose duty it was to carve, and who valued himself on his science, had just performed that office on the kid to the sound of music, his knife keeping time, beginning with a low tenor, and accomplishing the arduous feat amidst a magnificent diapason.

"Your cook is, of course, from Sicily?" said Pansa.

"Yes, of Syracuse."

"I will play you for him," said Clodius. "We will have a game between the courses."

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* See note (*b*) at the end.

"Better that sort of game, certainly, than a beast fight; but I cannot stake my Sicilian—you have nothing so precious to stake me in return."

"My Phillida—my beautiful dancing girl!"

"I never buy women," said the Greek; carelessly re-arranging his chaplet.

The musicians, who were stationed in the portico without, had commenced their office with the kid; they now directed the melody into a more soft, a more gay, yet it may be a more intellectual strain; and they chanted that song of Horace beginning, "Persicos odi," etc., so impossible to translate, and which they imagined applicable to a feast that, effeminate as it seems to us, was simple enough for the gorgeous revelry of the time. We are witnessing the domestic, and not the princely feast—the entertainment of a gentleman, not an emperor or a senator.

"Ah, good old Horace!" said Sallust, compassionately; "he sang well of feasts and girls, but not like our modern poets."

"The immortal Fulvius, for instance," said Clodius.

"Ah, Fulvius, the immortal!" said the umbra.

"And Spuræna; and Caius Mutius who wrote three epics in a year—could Horace do that, or Virgil either?" said Lepidus. "Those old poets all fell into the mistake of copying sculpture instead of painting. Simplicity and repose—that was their notion; but we moderns have fire, and passion, and energy—we never sleep, we imitate the colors of painting, its life, and its action. Immortal Fulvius!"

"By the way," said Sallust, "have you seen the new ode by Spuræna, in honor of our Egyptian Isis? It is magnificent—the true religious fervor."

"Isis seems a favorite divinity at Pompeii," said Glaucus.

"Yes!" said Pansa, "she is exceedingly in repute just at this moment; her statue has been uttering the most remarkable oracles. I am not superstitious, but I must confess that she has more than once assisted me materially in my magistracy with her advice. Her priests are so pious, too! none of your gay, none of your proud, ministers of Jupiter and Fortune: they walk barefoot, eat no meat, and pass the greater part of the night in solitary devotion!"

"An example to our other priesthoods, indeed!—Jupiter's temple wants reforming sadly," said Lepidus, who was a great reformer for all but himself.

"They say that Arbaces the Egyptian has imparted some most solemn mysteries to the priests of Isis," observed Sallust. "He boasts his descent from the race of Rameses, and declares that in his family the secrets of remotest antiquity are treasured."

"He certainly possesses the gift of the evil eye," said Clodius. "If I ever come upon that Medusa front without the previous charm, I am sure to lose a favorite horse, or throw the *canes** nine times running."

"The last would be indeed a miracle!" said Sallust, gravely.

"How mean you, Sallust?" returned the gamester, with a flushed brow.

"I mean, what you would *leave* me if I played often with you; and that is—nothing."

Clodius answered only by a smile of disdain.

"If Arbaces were not so rich," said Pansa, with a statety air, "I should stretch my authority a little, and inquire into the truth of the report which calls him an astrologer and a sorcerer. Agrippa, when ædile of Rome, banished all such terrible citizens. But a rich man—it is the duty of an ædile to protect the rich."

"What think you of this new sect, which I am told has even a few proselytes in Pompeii, these followers of the Hebrew God—Christus?"

"Oh, mere speculative visionaries," said Clodius; "they have not a single gentleman amongst them; their proselytes are poor, insignificant, ignorant people!"

"Who ought, however, to be crucified for their blasphemy," said Pansa, with vehemence: "they deny Venus and Jove! Nazarene is but another name for atheist. Let me catch them, that's all."

The second course was gone—the feasters fell back on their couches—there was a pause while they listened to the soft voices of the South, and the music of the Arcadian reed.

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* *Canes* or *Caniculæ*, the lowest throw at dice.

Glaucus was the most rapt and the least inclined to break the silence, but Clodius began already to think that they wasted time.

"*Bene vobis!* (your health!) my Glaucus," said he, quaffing a cup to each letter of the Greek's name, with the ease of the practised drinker. "Will you not be avenged on your ill-fortune of yesterday? See, the dice court us."

"As you will," said Glaucus.

"The dice in summer, and I an ædile!" * said Pansa, majesterially; "it is against all law."

"Not in your presence, grave Pansa," returned Clodius, rattling the dice in a long box; "your presence restrains all license: it is not the thing, but the excess of the thing, that hurts."

"What wisdom!" muttered the umbra.

"Well, I will look another way," said the ædile.

"Not yet, good Pansa; let us wait till we have supped," said Glaucus.

Clodius reluctantly yielded, concealing his vexation with a yawn.

"He gapes to devour the gold," whispered Lepidus to Sallust, in a quotation from the *Aulularia* of Plautus.

"Ah! how well I know these polypi, who hold all they touch," answered Sallust, in the same tone, and out of the same play.

The third course, consisting of a variety of fruits, pistachio nuts, sweetmeats, tarts, and confectionery tortured into a thousand fantastic and airy shapes, was now placed upon the table; and the ministri, or attendants, also set there the wine (which had hitherto been handed round to the guests) in large jugs of glass, each bearing upon it the schedule of its age and quality.

"Taste this Lesbian, my Pansa," said Sallust; "it is excellent."

"It is not very old," said Glaucus, "but it has been made precocious, like ourselves, by being put to the fire:—the wine to the flames of Vulcan—we to those of his wife—to whose honor I pour this cup."

"It is delicate," said Pansa: "but there is perhaps the least particle too much of rosin in its flavor."

"What a beautiful cup!" cried Clodius, taking up one of transparent crystal, the handles of which were wrought with gems, and twisted in the shape of serpents, the favorite fashion at Pompeii.

"This ring," said Glaucus, taking a costly jewel from the first joint of his finger and hanging it on the handle, "gives it a richer show, and renders it less unworthy of thy acceptance, my Clodius, on whom may the gods bestow health and fortune, long and oft to crown it to the brim!"

"You are too generous, Glaucus," said the gamester, handing the cup to his slave; "but your love gives it a double value."

"This cup to the Graces!" said Pansa, and he thrice emptied his calix. The guests followed his example.

"We have appointed no director to the feast," cried Sallust.

"Let us throw for him, then," said Clodius, rattling the dice-box.

"Nay," cried Glaucus, "no cold and trite director for us: no dictator of the banquet; no *rex convivii*. Have not the Romans sworn never to obey a king? Shall we be less free than your ancestors? Ho! musicians, let us have the song I composed the other night: it has a verse on this subject, 'The Bacchic hymn of The Hours.'"

The musicians struck their instruments to a wild Ionic air, while the youngest voices in the band chanted forth, in Greek words, as numbers, the following strain:—

THE EVENING HYMN OF THE HOURS.

I.

Through the summer day, through the weary day,
We have glided long;
Ere we speed to the Night through her portals gray,
Hail us with song!—
With song, with song,
With a bright and joyous song;
Such as the Cretan maid,
While the twilight made her bolder,
Woke, high through the ivy shade,
When the wine-god first consoled her.
From the hush'd, low-breathing skies,
Half-shut look'd their starry eyes,
And all around,
With a loving sound,
The Ægean waves were creeping:
On her lap lay the lynx's head;
Wild thyme was her bridal bed;
And aye through each tiny space,
In the green vine's green embrace,

* See note (*c*) at the end.

The Fauns were slily peeping:—
The Fauns, the prying Fauns—
The arch, the laughing Fauns—
The Fauns were slily peeping!

II.

Flagging and faint are we
With our ceaseless flight,
And dull shall our journey be
Through the realm of night.
Bathe us, O bathe our weary wings
In the purple wave, as it freshly springs
To your cups from the fount of light—
From the fount of light—from the fount of light;
For there when the sun has gone down in night,
There in the bowl we find him.
The grape is the well of that summer sun,
Or rather the stream that he gazed upon,
Till he left in truth, like the Thespian youth,*
His soul, as he gazed, behind him.

III.

A cup to Jove, and a cup to Love,
And a cup to the son of Maia,
And honor with three, the band zone-free,
The band of the bright Aglaia.
But since every bud in the wreath of pleasure
Ye owe to the sister Hours,
No stinted cups, in a formal measure,
The Bromian law makes ours.
He honors us most who gives us most,
And boasts, with a Bacchanal's honest boast,
He never will *count* the treasure.
Fastly we fleet, then seize our wings,
And plunge us deep in the sparkling springs;
And aye, as we rise with a dripping plume,
We'll scatter the spray round the garland's bloom,
We glow—we glow.
Behold, as the girls of the Eastern wave
Bore once with a shout to their crystal cave
The prize of the Mysian Hylas,
Even so—even so,
We have caught the young god in our warm embrace,
We hurry him on in our laughing race;
We hurry him on, with a whoop and song,
The cloudy rivers of night along—
Ho, ho!—we have caught thee, Psilas!

The guests applauded loudly When the poet is your host, his verses are sure to charm.

"Thoroughly Greek," said Lepidus: "the wildness, force, and energy of that tongue, it is impossible to imitate in the Roman poetry."

"It is, indeed, a great contrast," said Clodius, ironically at heart, though not in appearance, "to the old-fashioned and tame simplicity of that ode of Horace which we heard before. The air is beautifully Ionic: the word puts me in mind of a toast—Companions, I give you the beautiful Ione."

"Ione!—the name is Greek," said Glaucus, in a soft voice. "I drink the health with delight. But who is Ione?"

"Ah! you have but just come to Pompeii, or you would deserve ostracism for your ignorance," said Lepidus, conceitedly: "not to know Ione, is not to know the chief charm of our city."

"She is of the most rare beauty," said Pansa; "and what a voice!"

"She can feed only on nightingales' tongues," said Clodius.

"Nightingales' tongues!—beautiful thought!" sighed the umbra.

"Enlighten me, I beseech you," said Glaucus.

"Know then—" began Lepidus.

"Let me speak," cried Clodius; "you drawl out your words as if you spoke tortoises."

"And you speak stones," muttered the coxcomb to himself, as he fell back disdainfully on his couch.

"Know then, my Glaucus," said Clodius, "that Ione is a stranger who has but lately come to Pompeii. She sings like Sappho, and her songs are her own composing; and as for the tibia, and the cithara, and the lyre, I know not in which she most outdoes the Muses. Her beauty is most dazzling. Her house is perfect; such taste—such gems—such bronzes! She is rich, and generous as she is rich."

"Her lovers, of course," said Glaucus, "take care that she does not starve; and money lightly won is always lavishly spent."

"Her lovers—ah, there is the enigma! Ione has but one vice—she is chaste. She has all Pompeii at her feet, and she has no lovers: she will not even marry."

"No lovers!" echoed Glaucus.

"No; she has the soul of Vesta, with the girdle of Venus."

"What refined expressions!" said the umbra.

"A miracle!" cried Glaucus. "Can we not see her?"

"I will take you there this evening," said Clodius; "meanwhile—," added he, once more rattling the dice.

* Narcissus.

"I am yours!" said the complaisant Glaucus. "Pansa, turn your face!"

Lepidus and Sallust played at odd and even, and the umbra looked on, while Glaucus and Clodius became gradually absorbed in the chances of the dice.

"By Pollux!" cried Glaucus, "this is the second time I have thrown the caniculæ" (the lowest throw).

"Now Venus befriend me!" said Clodius, rattling the box for several moments. "O Alma Venus—it is Venus herself!" as he threw the highest cast, named from that goddess,—whom he who wins money, indeed, usually propitiates!

"Venus is ungrateful to me," said Glaucus gaily; "I have always sacrificed on her altar."

"He who plays with Clodius," whispered Lepidus, "will soon, like Plautus's Curculio, put his pallium for the stakes."

"Poor Glaucus!—he is as blind as Fortune herself," replied Sallust, in the same tone.

"I will play no more," said Glaucus; "I have lost thirty sestertia."

"I am sorry—," began Clodius.

"Amiable man!" groaned the umbra.

"Not at all!" exclaimed Glaucus; "the pleasure I take in your gain compensates the pain of my loss."

The conversation now grew general and animated; the wine circulated more freely; and Ione once more became the subject of eulogy to the guests of Glaucus.

"Instead of outwatching the stars, let us visit one at whose beauty the stars grow pale," said Lepidus.

Clodius, who saw no chance of renewing the dice, seconded the proposal; and Glaucus, though he civilly pressed his guests to continue the banquet, could not but let them see that his curiosity had been excited by the praises of Ione: they therefore resolved to adjourn (all, at least, but Pansa and the umbra) to the house of the fair Greek. They drank, therefore, to the health of Glaucus and of Titus—they performed their last libation—they resumed their slippers—they descended the stairs—passed the illumined atrium—and walking unbitten over the fierce dog painted on the threshold, found themselves beneath the light of the moon just risen, in the lively and still crowded streets of Pompeii.

They passed the jewellers' quarter, sparkling with lights, caught and reflected by the gems displayed in the shops, and arrived at last at the door of Ione. The vestibule blazed with rows of lamps; curtains of embroidered purple hung on either aperture of the tablinum, whose walls and mosaic pavement glowed with the richest colors of the artist; and under the portico which surrounded the odorous viridarium they found Ione, already surrounded by adoring and applauding guests.

"Did you say she was Athenian?" whispered Glaucus, ere he passed into the peristyle.

"No, she is from Neapolis."

"Neapolis!" echoed Glaucus; and at that moment the group, dividing on either side of Ione, gave to his view that bright, that nymph-like beauty, which for months had shone down upon the waters of his memory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE OF ISIS.—ITS PRIEST.—THE CHARACTER OF ARBACES DEVELOPS ITSELF.

The story returns to the Egyptian. We left Arbaces upon the shores of the noonday sea, after he had parted from Glaucus and his companion. As he approached to the more crowded part of the bay, he paused and gazed upon that animated scene with folded arms, and a bitter smile upon his dark features.

"Gulls, dupes, fools, that ye are!" muttered he to himself; "whether business or pleasure, trade or religion, be your pursuit, you are equally cheated by the passions that ye should rule! How I could loathe you, if I did not hate—yes, hate! Greek or Roman, it is from us, from the dark lore of Egypt, that ye have stolen the fire that gives you souls. Your knowledge—your poesy—your laws—your arts—your barbarous mastery of war (all how tame and mutilated, when compared with the vast original!)—ye have filched, as a slave filches the fragments of the feast, from us! And now, ye mimics of a mimic!—Romans, forsooth! the mushroom herd of robbers!—*ye* are our masters! the pyramids look down no more on the race

of Rameses—the eagle cowers over the serpent of the Nile. *Our* masters—no, not *mine*. My soul, by the power of its wisdom, controls and chains you, though the fetters are unseen. So long as craft can master force, so long as religion has a cave from which oracles can dupe mankind, the wise hold an empire over earth. Even from your vices Arbaces distils his pleasures;—pleasures unprofaned by vulgar eyes—pleasures vast, wealthy, inexhaustible, of which your enervate minds, in their unimaginative sensuality, cannot conceive or dream! Plod on, plod on, fools of ambition and of avarice! your petty thirst for fasces and quæstorships, and all the mummery of servile power, provokes my laughter and my scorn. My power can extend wherever man believes. I ride over the souls that the purple veils. Thebes may fall, Egypt be a name; the world itself furnishes the subjects of Arbaces."

Thus saying, the Egyptian moved slowly on; and, entering the town, his tall figure towered above the crowded throng of the forum, and swept towards the small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis.*

That edifice was then but of recent erection; the ancient temple had been thrown down in the earthquake sixteen years before, and the new building had become as much in vogue with the versatile Pompeians as a new church or a new preacher may be with us. The oracles of the goddess at Pompeii were indeed remarkable, not more for the mysterious language in which they were clothed, than for the credit which was attached to their mandates and predictions. If they were not dictated by a divinity, they were framed at least by a profound knowledge of mankind; they applied themselves exactly to the circumstances of individuals, and made a notable contrast to the vague and loose generalities of their rival temples. As Arbaces now arrived at the rails which separated the profane from the sacred place, a crowd, composed of all classes, but especially of the commercial, collected, breathless and reverential, before the many altars which rose in the open court. In the walls of the cella, elevated on seven steps of Parian marble, various statues stood in niches, and those walls were ornamented with the pomegranate consecrated to Isis. An oblong pedestal occupied the interior building, on which stood two statues, one of Isis, and its companion represented the silent and mystic Orus. But the building contained many other deities to grace the court of the Egyptian deity: her kindred and many-titled Bacchus, and the Cyprian Venus, a Grecian disguise for herself, rising from her bath, and the dog-headed Anubis, and the ox Apis, and various Egyptian idols of uncouth form and unknown appellations.

But we must not suppose that, among the cities of Magna Græcia, Isis was worshipped with those forms and ceremonies which were of right her own. The mongrel and modern nations of the South, with a mingled arrogance and ignorance, confounded the worships of all climes and ages. And the profound mysteries of the Nile were degraded by a hundred meretricious and frivolous admixtures from the creeds of Cephisus and of Tibur. The temple of Isis in Pompeii was served by Roman and Greek priests, ignorant alike of the language and the customs of her ancient votaries; and the descendant of the dread Egyptian kings, beneath the appearance of reverential awe, secretly laughed to scorn the puny mummeries which imitated the solemn and typical worship of his burning clime.

Ranged now on either side the steps was the sacrificial crowd, arrayed in white garments, while at the summit stood two of the inferior priests, the one holding a palm-branch, the other a slender sheaf of corn. In the narrow passage in front thronged the bystanders.

"And what," whispered Arbaces to one of the bystanders, who was a merchant engaged in the Alexandrian trade, which trade had probably first introduced in Pompeii the worship of the Egyptian goddess—"What occasion now assembles you before the altars of the venerable Isis? It seems, by the white robes of the group before me, that a sacrifice is to be rendered; and by the assembly of the priests, that ye are prepared for some oracle. To what question is it to vouchsafe a reply?"

"We are merchants," replied the by-

* See note (*d*) at the end.

stander (who was no other than Diomed) in the same voice, "who seek to know the fate of our vessels, which sail for Alexandria to-morrow. We are about to offer up a sacrifice and implore an answer from the goddess. I am not one of those who have petitioned the priest to sacrifice, as you may see by my dress, but I have some interest in the success of the fleet;—by Jupiter! yes. I have a pretty trade, else how could I live in these hard times?"

The Egyptian replied gravely,—"That though Isis was properly the goddess of agriculture, she was no less the patron of commerce." Then turning his head towards the east, Arbaces seemed absorbed in silent prayer.

And now in the centre of the steps appeared a priest robed in white from head to foot, the veil parting over the crown; two new priests relieved those hitherto stationed at either corner, being naked half-way down to the breast, and covered, for the rest, in white and loose robes. At the same time, seated at the bottom of the steps, a priest commenced a solemn air upon a long wind-instrument of music. Half-way down the steps stood another flamen, holding in one hand the votive wreath, in the other a white wand; while, adding to the picturesque scene of that eastern ceremony, the stately ibis (bird sacred to the Egyptian worship) looked mutely down from the wall upon the rite, or stalked beside the altar at the base of the steps.

At that altar now stood the sacrificial flamen.*

The countenance of Arbaces seemed to lose all its rigid calm while the aruspices inspected the entrails, and to be intent in pious anxiety—to rejoice and brighten as the signs were declared favorable, and the fire began bright and clearly to consume the sacred portion of the victim amidst odors of myrrh and frankincense. It was then that a dead silence fell over the whispering crowd, and the priests gathering round the cella, another priest, naked save by a cincture round the middle, rushed forward, and dancing with wild gestures, implored an answer from the goddess. He ceased at last in exhaustion, and a low murmuring noise was heard within the body of the statue; thrice the head moved, and the lips parted, and then a hollow voice uttered these mystic words:—

"There are waves like chargers that meet and glow,
There are graves ready wrought in the rocks below:
On the brow of the future the dangers lour,
But blest are your barks in the fearful hour."

The voice ceased—the crowd breathed more freely—the merchants looked at each other. "Nothing can be more plain," murmured Diomed; "there is to be a storm at sea, as there very often is at the beginning of autumn, but our vessels are to be saved. O beneficent Isis!"

"Lauded eternally be the goddess!" said the merchants: "what can be less equivocal than her prediction?"

Raising one hand in sign of silence to the people, for the rites of Isis enjoined what to the lively Pompeians was an impossible suspense from the use of the vocal organs, the chief priest poured his libation on the altar, and after a short concluding prayer the ceremony was over and the congregation dismissed. Still, however, as the crowd dispersed themselves here and there, the Egyptian lingered by the railing, and when the space became tolerably cleared, one of the priests, approaching it, saluted him with great appearance of friendly familiarity.

The countenance of the priest was remarkably unprepossessing—his shaven skull was so low and narrow in the front as nearly to approach to the conformation of that of an African savage, save only towards the temples, where, in that organ styled acquisitiveness by the pupils of a science modern in name, but best practically known (as their sculpture teaches us) amongst the ancients, two huge and almost preternatural protuberances yet more distorted the unshapely head;—around the brows the skin was puckered into a web of deep and intricate wrinkles—the eyes, dark and small, rolled in a muddy and yellow orbit—the nose, short yet coarse, was distended at the nostrils like a satyr's—and the thick but pallid lips, the high-cheek bones, the livid and motley hues that struggled through the parchment skin, completed a countenance which none could behold without repugnance, and few without terror and

* See a singular picture, in the Museum of Naples, of an Egyptian sacrifice.

distrust: whatever the wishes of the mind, the animal frame was well fitted to execute them; the wiry muscles of the throat, the broad chest, the nervous hands and lean gaunt arms, which were bared above the elbow, betokened a form capable alike of great active exertion and passive endurance.

"Calenus," said the Egyptian to this fascinating flamen, "you have improved the voice of the statue much by attending to my suggestion; and your verses are excellent. Always prophesy good fortune, unless there is an absolute impossibility of its fulfilment."

"Besides," added Calenus, "if the storm does come, and if it does overwhelm the accursed ships, have we not prophesied it? and are the barks not blest to be at rest?—for rest prays the mariner in the Ægean sea, or at least so says Horace;—can the mariner be more at rest in the sea than when he is at the bottom of it?"

"Right, my Calenus; I wish Apæcides would take a lesson from your wisdom. But I desire to confer with you relative to him and to other matters: you can admit me into one of your less sacred apartments?"

"Assuredly," replied the priest, leading the way to one of the small chambers which surrounded the open gate. Here they seated themselves before a small table spread with dishes containing fruit and eggs, and various cold meats, with vases of excellent wine, of which while the companions partook, a curtain, drawn across the entrance opening to the court, concealed them from view, but admonished them by the thinness of the partition to speak low, or to speak no secrets: they chose the former alternative.

"Thou knowest," said Arbaces, in a voice that scarcely stirred the air, so soft and inward was its sound, "that it has ever been my maxim to attach myself to the young. From their flexile and unformed minds I can carve out my fittest tools. I weave—I warp—I mould them at my will. Of the men I make merely followers or servants; of the women—"

"Mistresses," said Calenus, as a livid grin distorted his ungainly features.

"Yes, I do not disguise it; woman is the main object, the great appetite, of my soul. As *you* feed the victim for the slaughter, *I* love to rear the votaries of my pleasure. I love to train, to ripen their minds—to unfold the sweet blossom of their hidden passions, in order to prepare the fruit to my taste. I loathe your ready-made and ripened courtesans; it is in the soft and unconscious progress of innocence to desire that I find the true charm of love: it is thus that I defy satiety; and by contemplating the freshness of others, I sustain the freshness of my own sensations. From the young hearts of my victims I draw the ingredients of the caldron in which I re-youth myself. But enough of this: to the subject before us. You know, then, that in Neapolis some time since I encountered Ione and Apæcides, brother and sister, the children of Athenians who had settled at Neapolis. The death of their parents, who knew and esteemed me, constituted me their guardian. I was not unmindful of the trust. The youth, docile and mild, yielded readily to the impression I sought to stamp upon him. Next to woman, I love the old recollections of my ancestral land; I love to keep alive—to propagate on distant shores (which her colonies perchance yet people), her dark and mystic creeds. It may be that it pleases me to delude mankind, while I thus serve the deities. To Apæcides I taught the solemn faith of Isis. I unfolded to him something of those sublime allegories which are couched beneath her worship. I excited in a soul peculiarly alive to religious fervor that enthusiasm which imagination begets on faith. I have placed him amongst you: he is one of you."

"He is so," said Calenus: "but in thus stimulating his faith, you have robbed him of wisdom. He is horror-struck that he is no longer duped; our sage delusions, our speaking statues and secret staircases, dismay and revolt him; he pines; he wastes away; he mutters to himself; he refuses to share our ceremonies. He has been known to frequent the company of men suspected of adherence to that new and atheistical creed which denies all our gods, and terms our oracles the inspirations of that malevolent spirit of which eastern tradition speaks. Our oracles—alas! we know well whose inspirations *they* are."

"This is what I feared," said Arbaces, musingly, "from various reproaches he made me when I last saw him. Of late he hath

shunned my steps: I must find him: I must continue my lessons; I mut lead him into the adytum of Wisdom. I must teach him that there are two stages of sanctity—the first, FAITH—the next, DELUSION: the one for the vulgar, the second for the sage."

"I never passed through the first," said Calenus; "nor you either, I think, my Arbaces."

"You err," replied the Egyptian, gravely. "I believe at this day (not indeed that which I teach, but that which I teach not), Nature has a sanctity against which I cannot—(nor would I)—steel conviction. I believe in mine own knowledge, and that has revealed to me,—but no matter. Now to earthlier and more inviting themes. If I thus fulfilled my object with Apæcides, what was my design for Ione? Thou knowest already I intend her for my queen—my bride—my heart's Isis. Never till I saw her knew I all the love of which my nature is capable."

"I hear from a thousand lips that she is a second Helen," said Calenus; and he smacked his own lips, but whether at the wine or at the notion, it is not easy to decide.

"Yes, she has a beauty that Greece itself never excelled," resumed Arbaces. "But that is not all: she has a soul worthy to match with mine. She has a genius beyond that of woman — keen — dazzling — bold. Poetry flows spontaneous to her lips: utter but a truth, and, however intricate and profound, her mind seizes and commands it. Her imagination and her reason are not at war with each other; they harmonize and direct her course as the winds and the waves direct some lofty bark. With this she unites a daring independence of thought: she can stand alone in the world; she can be brave as she is gentle: this is the nature I have sought all my life in woman, and never found till now. Ione must be mine! In her I have a double passion; I wish to enjoy a beauty of spirit as of form."

"She is not yours yet, then?" said the priest.

"No: she loves me—but as a friend:—she loves me with her mind only. She fancies in me the paltry virtues which I have only the profounder virtue to disdain. But you must pursue with me her history. The brother and sister were young and rich: Ione is proud and ambitious—proud of her genius—the magic of her poetry—the charm of her conversation. When her brother left me, and entered your temple, in order to be near him she removed also to Pompeii. She has suffered her talents to be known. She summons crowds to her feasts; her voice enchants them; her poetry subdues. She delights in being thought the successor of Erinna."

"Or of Sappho?"

"But Sappho without love! I encouraged her in this boldness of career—in this indulgence of vanity and of pleasure. I loved to steep her amidst the dissipations and luxury of this abandoned city. Mark me, Calenus! I desired to enervate her mind!—it has been too pure to receive yet the breath which I wish not to pass, but burningly to eat into, the mirror. I wished her to be surrounded by lovers, hollow, vain, and frivolous (lovers that her nature must despise), in order to feel the want of love. Then, in those soft intervals of lassitude that succeed to excitement, I can weave my spells—excite her interest—attract her passions—possess myself of her heart. For it is not the young, nor the beautiful, nor the gay, that should fascinate Ione; her imagination must be won, and the life of Arbaces has been one scene of triumph over the imaginations of his kind."

"And hast thou no fear, then, of thy rivals? The gallants of Italy are skilled in the art to please."

"None! Her Greek soul despises the barbarian Romans, and would scorn itself if it admitted a thought of love for one of that upstart race."

"But thou art an Egyptian, not a Greek!"

"Egypt," replied Arbaces, "is the mother of Athens. Her tutelary Minerva is our deity; and her founder, Cecrops, was the fugitive of Egyptian Sais. This have I already taught to her; and in my blood she venerates the eldest dynasties of earth; but yet I will own that of late some uneasy suspicions have crossed my mind. She is more silent than she used to be; she loves melancholy and subduing music; she sighs without an outward cause. This may be the beginning of love—it may be the want of love. In either case it is time for me to begin my operations on her fancies and her

heart: in the one case, to divert the source of love to me; in the other, in me to awaken it. It is for this that I have sought you."

"And how can I assist you?"

"I am about to invite her to a feast in my house: I wish to dazzle—to bewilder—to inflame her senses. Our arts—the arts by which Egypt trained her young novitiates—must be employed; and, under veil of the mysteries of religion, I will open to her the secrets of love."

"Ah! now I understand:—one of those voluptuous banquets that, despite our dull vows of mortified coldness, we, thy priests of Isis, have shared at thy house."

"No, no! Thinkest thou her chaste eyes are ripe for such scenes? No; but first we must ensnare the brother—an easier task. Listen to me, while I give you my instructions."

CHAPTER V.

MORE OF THE FLOWER-GIRL.—THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

THE sun shone gaily into that beautiful chamber in the house of Glaucus, which I have before said is now called "the Room of Leda." The morning rays entered through rows of small casements at the higher part of the room, and through the door which opened on the garden, that answered to the inhabitants of the southern cities the same purpose that a green-house or conservatory does to us. The size of the garden did not adapt it for exercise, but the various and fragrant plants with which it was filled gave a luxury to that indolence so dear to the dwellers in a sunny clime. And now the odors, fanned by a gentle wind creeping from the adjacent sea, scattered themselves over that chamber, whose walls vied with the richest colors of the most glowing flowers. Besides the gem of the room—the painting of Leda and Tyndarus—in the centre of each compartment of the walls were set other pictures of exquisite beauty. In one you saw Cupid leaning on the knees of Venus; in another, Ariadne sleeping on the beach, unconscious of the perfidy of Theseus. Merrily the sunbeams played to and fro on the tessellated floor and the brilliant walls—far more happily came the rays of joy to the heart of the young Glaucus.

"I have seen her, then," said he, as he paced that narrow chamber—"I have heard her—nay, I have spoken to her again—I have listened to the music of her song, and she sung of glory and of Greece. I have discovered the long-sought idol of my dreams; and, like the Cyprian sculptor, I have breathed life into my own imaginings."

Longer, perhaps, had been the enamored soliloquy of Glaucus, but at that moment a shadow darkened the threshold of the chamber, and a young female, still half a child in years, broke upon his solitude. She was dressed simply in a white tunic, which reached from the neck to the ankles; under her arm she bore a basket of flowers, and in the other hand she held a bronze water-vase; her features were more formed than exactly became her years, yet they were soft and feminine in their outline, and, without being beautiful in themselves, they were almost made so by their beauty of expression; there was something ineffably gentle, and you would say patient, in her aspect. A look of resigned sorrow, of tranquil endurance, had banished the smile, but not the sweetness, from her lips; something timid and cautious in her step—something wandering in her eyes, led you to suspect the affliction which she had suffered from her birth:—she was blind; but in the orbs themselves there was no visible defect—their melancholy and subdued light was clear, cloudless, and serene. "They tell me that Glaucus is here," said she; "may I come in?"

"Ah, my Nydia," said the Greek, "is that you? I knew you would not neglect my invitation."

"Glaucus did but justice to himself," answered Nydia, with a blush; "for he has always been kind to the poor blind girl."

"Who could be otherwise?" said Glaucus, tenderly, and in the voice of a compassionate brother.

Nydia sighed and paused before she resumed, without replying to his remark. "You have but lately returned?"

"This is the sixth sun that hath shone upon me at Pompeii."

"And you are well? Ah, I need not ask —for who that sees the earth, which they tell me is so beautiful, can be ill?"

"I am well. And you, Nydia—how you have grown! Next year you will be thinking what answer to make your lovers."

A second blush passed over the cheek of Nydia, but this time she frowned as she blushed. "I have brought you some flowers," said she, without replying to a remark that she seemed to resent; and feeling about the room till she found the table that stood by Glaucus, she laid the basket upon it: "they are poor, but they are fresh-gathered."

"They might come from Flora herself," said he, kindly; "and I renew again my vow to the Graces that I will wear no other garlands while thy hands can weave me such as these."

"And how find you the flowers in your viridarium?—are they thriving?"

"Wonderfully so—the Lares themselves must have tended them."

"Ah, now you give me pleasure; for I came, as often as I could steal the leisure, to water and tend them in your absence."

"How shall I thank thee, fair Nydia?" said the Greek. "Glaucus little dreamed that he left one memory so watchful over his favorites at Pompeii."

The hand of the child trembled, and her breast heaved beneath her tunic. She turned round in embarrassment. "The sun is hot for the poor flowers," said she, "to-day, and they will miss me; for I have been ill lately, and it is nine days since I visited them."

"Ill, Nydia!—yet your cheek has more color than it had last year."

"I am often ailing," said the blind girl, touchingly; "and as I grow up I grieve more that I am blind. But now to the flowers!" So saying, she made a slight reverence with her head, and passing into the viridarium, busied herself with watering the flowers.

"Poor Nydia," thought Glaucus, gazing on her; "thine is a hard doom! Thou seest not the earth—nor the sun—nor the ocean—nor the stars;—above all, thou canst not behold Ione."

At that last thought his mind flew back to the past evening, and was a second time disturbed in its reveries by the entrance of Clodius. It was a proof how much a single evening had sufficed to increase and to refine the love of the Athenian for Ione, that whereas he had confided to Clodius the secret of his first interview with her, and the effect it had produced on him, he now felt an invisible aversion even to mention to him her name. He had seen Ione bright, pure, unsullied, in the midst of the gayest and most profligate gallants of Pompeii, charming rather than awing the boldest into respect, and changing the very nature of the most sensual and the least ideal:—as by her intellectual and refining spells she reversed the fable of Circe, and converted the animals into men. They who could not understand her soul were made spiritual, as it were, by the magic of her beauty;—they who had no heart for poetry had ears, at least, for the melody of her voice. Seeing her thus surrounded, purifying and brightening all things with her presence, Glaucus almost for the first time felt the nobleness of his own nature,—he felt how unworthy of the goddess of his dreams had been his companions and his pursuits. A veil seemed lifted from his eyes; he saw that immeasurable distance between himself and his associates which the deceiving mists of pleasure had hitherto concealed; he was refined by a sense of his courage in aspiring to Ione. He felt that henceforth it was his destiny to look upward and to soar. He could no longer breathe that name, which sounded to the sense of his ardent fancy as something sacred and divine, to lewd and vuglar ears. She was no longer the beautiful girl once seen and passionately remembered,—she was already the mistress, the divinity of his soul. This feeling who has not experienced?—If thou hast not, then thou hast never loved!

When Clodius therefore spoke to him in affected transports of the beauty of Ione, Glaucus felt only resentment and disgust that such lips should dare to praise her; he answered coldly, and the Roman imagined that his passion was cured instead of heightened. Clodius scarcely regretted it, for he was anxious that Glaucus should marry an heiress yet more richly endowed—Julia, the daughter of the wealthy Diomed, whose gold the gamester imagined he could readily divert into his own coffers. Their conversation did not flow with its usual ease; and no sooner

had Clodius left him than Glaucus bent his way to the house of Ione. In passing by the threshold he again encountered Nydia, who had finished her graceful task. She knew his step on the instant.

"You are early abroad?" said she.

"Yes; for the skies of Campania rebuke the sluggard who neglects them."

"Ah, would I could see them!" murmured the blind girl, but so low that Glaucus did not overhear the complaint.

The Thessalian lingered on the threshold a few moments, and then guiding her steps by a long staff, which she used with great dexterity, she took her way homeward. She soon turned from the more gaudy streets, and entered a quarter of the town but little loved by the decorous and the sober. But from the low and rude evidences of vice around her, she was saved by her misfortune. And at that hour the streets were quiet and silent, nor was her youthful ear shocked by the sounds which too often broke along the obscene and obscure haunts she patiently and sadly traversed.

She knocked at the back-door of a sort of tavern; it opened, and a rude voice bade her give an account of the sesterces. Ere she could reply, another voice less vulgarly accented said—

"Never mind those petty profits, my Burbo. The girl's voice will be wanted again soon at our rich friend's revels; and he pays, as thou knowest, pretty high for his nightingales' tongues."

"Oh, I hope not—I trust not," cried Nydia, trembling; "I will beg from sunrise to sunset, but send me not there."

"And why?" asked the same voice.

"Because—because I am young, and delicately born, and the female companions I meet there are not fit associates for one who—who—"

"Is a slave in the house of Burbo," returned the voice ironically, and with a coarse laugh.

The Thessalian put down the flowers, and, leaning her face on her hands, wept silently.

Meanwhile, Glaucus sought the house of the beautiful Neapolitan. He found Ione sitting amidst her attendants, who were at work around her. Her harp stood at her side, for Ione herself was unusually idle, perhaps unusually thoughtful, that day. He thought her even more beautiful by the morning light, and in her simple robe, than amidst the blazing lamps, and decorated with the costly jewels of the previous night; not the less so from a certain paleness that overspread her transparent hues,—not the less so from the blush that mounted over them when he approached. Accustomed to flatter, flattery died upon his lips when he addressed Ione. He felt it beneath her to *utter* the homage which every *look* conveyed. They spoke of Greece; this was a theme on which Ione loved rather to listen than to converse: it was a theme on which the Greek could have been eloquent for ever. He described to her the silver olive groves that yet clad the banks of Ilyssus, and the temples, already despoiled of half their glories—but how beautiful in decay! He looked back on the melancholy city of Harmodius the free, and Pericles the magnificent, from the height of that distant memory, which mellowed into one hazy light all the ruder and darker shades. He had seen the land of poetry chiefly in the poetical age of early youth; and the associations of patriotism were blended with those of the flush and spring of life. And Ione listened to him, absorbed and mute; dearer were those accents, and those descriptions, than all the prodigal adulation of her numberless adorers. Was it a sin to love her countryman? she loved Athens in him—the gods of her race, the land of her dreams, spoke to her in his voice! From that time they daily saw each other. At the cool of the evening they made excursions on the placid sea. By night they met again in Ione's porticos and halls. Their love was sudden, but it was strong; it filled all the sources of their life. Heart—brain—sense—imagination, all were its ministers and priests. As you take some obstacle from two objects that have a mutual attraction, they met, and united at once; their wonder was, that they had lived separate so long. And it was natural that they should so love. Young, beautiful, and gifted,—of the same birth, and the same souls;—there was poetry in their very union. They imagined the heavens smiled upon their affection. As the persecuted seek refuge at the shrine, so they recognized in the altar of their love an asy-

lum from the sorrows of earth; they covered it with flowers,—they knew not of the serpents that lay coiled behind.

One evening, the fifth after their first meeting at Pompeii, Glaucus and Ione, with a small party of chosen friends, were returning from an excursion round the bay; their vessel skimmed lightly over the twilight waters, whose lucid mirror was only broken by the dripping oars. As the rest of the party conversed gaily with each other, Glaucus lay at the feet of Ione, and he would have looked up in her face but he did not dare. Ione broke the pause between them.

"My poor brother," said she, sighing, "how once he would have enjoyed this hour!"

"Your brother!" said Glaucus; "I have not seen him. Occupied with you, I have thought of nothing else, or I should have asked if that was not your brother for whose companionship you left me at the Temple of Minerva, in Neapolis?"

"It was."

"And is he here?"

"He is."

"At Pompeii! and not constantly with you? Impossible!"

"He has other duties," answered Ione, sadly; "he is a priest of Isis."

"So young, too; and that priesthood, in its laws at least, so severe!" said the warm and bright-hearted Greek, in surprise and pity. "What could have been his inducement?"

"He was always enthusiastic and fervent in religious devotion; and the eloquence of an Egyptian—our friend and guardian—kindled in him the pious desire to consecrate his life to the most mystic of our deities. Perhaps, in the intenseness of his zeal, he found in the severity of that peculiar priesthood its peculiar attraction."

"And he does not repent his choice?—I trust he is happy."

Ione sighed deeply, and lowered her veil over her eyes.

"I wish," said she, after a pause, "that he had not been so hasty. Perhaps, like all who expect too much, he is revolted too easily!"

"Then he is not happy in his new condition. And this Egyptian, was he a priest himself? was he interested in recruits to the sacred band?"

"No. His main interest was in our happiness. He thought he promoted that of my brother. We were left orphans."

"Like myself," said Glaucus, with a deep meaning in his voice.

Ione cast down her eyes as she resumed,—

"And Arbaces sought to supply the place of our parent. You must know him. He loves genius."

"Arbaces! I know him already; at least, we speak when we meet. But for your praise I would not seek to know more of him. My heart inclines readily to most of my kind. But that dark Egyptian, with his gloomy brow and icy smiles, seems to me to sadden the very sun. One would think that, like Epimenides the Cretan, he had spent forty years in a cave, and had found something unnatural in the daylight ever afterwards."

"Yet, like Epimenides, he is kind, and wise, and gentle," answered Ione.

"Oh, happy that he has thy praise! He needs no other virtues to make him dear to me."

"His calm, his coldness," said Ione, evasively pursuing the subject, "are perhaps but the exhaustion of past sufferings; as yonder mountain (and she pointed to Vesuvius), which we see dark and tranquil in the distance, once nursed the fires for ever quenched."

They both gazed on the mountain as Ione said these words; the rest of the sky was bathed in rosy and tender hues, but over that gray summit, rising amidst the woods and vineyards that then clomb half-way up the ascent, there hung a black and ominous cloud, the single frown of the landscape. A sudden and unaccountable gloom came over each as they thus gazed; and in that sympathy which love had already taught them, and which bade them, in the slightest shadows of emotion, the faintest presentiment of evil, turn for refuge to each other, their gaze at the same moment left the mountain, and full of unimaginable tenderness met. What need had they of words to say they loved?

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOWLER SNARES AGAIN THE BIRD THAT HAD JUST ESCAPED, AND SETS HIS NETS FOR A NEW VICTIM.

In the history I relate, the events are crowded and rapid as those of the drama. I write of an epoch in which days sufficed to ripen the ordinary fruits of years.

Meanwhile, Arbaces had not of late much frequented the house of Ione; and when he had visited her he had not encountered Glaucus, nor knew he, as yet, of that love which had so suddenly sprung up between himself and his designs. In his interest for the brother of Ione, he had been forced, too, a little while, to suspend his interest in Ione herself. His pride and his selfishness were aroused and alarmed at the sudden change which had come over the spirit of the youth. He trembled lest he himself should lose a docile pupil and Isis an enthusiastic servant. Apæcides had ceased to seek or to consult him. He was rarely to be found; he turned sullenly from the Egyptian,—nay, he fled when he perceived him in the distance. Arbaces was one of those haughty and powerful spirits accustomed to master others; he chafed at the notion that one once his own should ever elude his grasp. He swore inly that Apæcides should not escape him.

It was with this resolution that he passed through a thick grove in the city, which lay between his house and that of Ione, in his way to the latter; and there leaning against a tree, and gazing on the ground, he came unawares on the young priest of Isis.

"Apæcides!" said he,—and he laid his hand affectionately on the young man's shoulder.

The priest started; and his first instinct seemed to be that of flight. "My son," said the Egyptian, "what has chanced that you desire to shun me?"

Apæcides remained silent and sullen, looking down on the earth, as his lips quivered, and his breast heaved with emotion.

"Speak to me, my friend," continued the Egyptian. "Speak. Something burdens thy spirit. What hast thou to reveal?"

"To thee—nothing."

"And why is it to me thou art thus unconfidential?"

"Because thou hast been my enemy."

"Let us confer," said Arbaces, in a low voice; and drawing the reluctant arm of the priest in his own, he led him to one of the seats which were scattered within the grove. They sat down,—and in those gloomy forms there was something congenial to the shade and solitude of the place.

Apæcides was in the spring of his years, yet he seemed to have exhausted even more of life than the Egyptian; his delicate and regular features were worn and colorless; his eyes were hollow, and shone with a brilliant and feverish glare; his frame bowed prematurely, and in his hands, which were small to effeminacy, the blue and swollen veins indicated the lassitude and weakness of the relaxed fibres. You saw in his face a strong resemblance to Ione, but the expression was altogether different from that majestic and spiritual calm which breathed so divine and classical a repose over his sister's beauty. In her, enthusiasm was visible, but it seemed always suppressed and restrained; this made the charm and sentiment of her countenance; you longed to awaken a spirit which reposed, but evidently did not sleep. In Apæcides the whole aspect betokened the fervor and passion of his temperament, and the intellectual portion of his nature seemed, by the wild fire of the eyes, the great breadth of the temples when compared with the height of the brow, the trembling restlessness of the lips, to be swayed and tyrannized over by the imaginative and ideal. Fancy, with the sister, had stopped short at the golden goal of poetry; with the brother, less happy and less restrained, it had wandered into visions more intangible and unembodied; and the faculties which gave genius to the one threatened madness to the other.

"You say I have been your enemy," said Arbaces. "I know the cause of that unjust accusation: I have placed you amidst the priests of Isis—you are revolted at their trickeries and imposture—you think that I too have deceived you—the purity of your mind is offended—you imagine that I am one of the deceitful——"

"You know the jugglings of that impious

craft," answered Apæcides; "why did you disguise them from me?—When you excited my desire to devote myself to the office whose garb I bear, you spoke to me of the holy life of men resigning themselves to knowledge—you have given me for companions an ignorant and sensual herd, who have no knowledge but that of the grossest frauds;—you spoke to me of men sacrificing the earthlier pleasures to the sublime cultivation of virtue—you place me amongst men reeking with all the filthiness of vice;—you spoke to me of the friends, the enlighteners of our common kind—I see but their cheats and deluders! Oh, it was basely done!—you have robbed me of the glory of youth, of the convictions of virtue, of the sanctifying thirst after wisdom. Young as I was, rich, fervent, the sunny pleasures of earth before me, I resigned all without a sigh, nay, with happiness and exultation, in the thought that I resigned them for the abstruse mysteries of diviner wisdom, for the companionship of gods—for the revelations of Heaven—and now—now——"

Convulsive sobs checked the priest's voice; he covered his face with his hands, and large tears forced themselves through the wasted fingers, and ran profusely down his vest.

"What I promised to thee, that will I give, my friend, my pupil; these have been but trials to thy virtue—it comes forth the brighter for thy novitiate,—think no more of those dull cheats—assort no more with those menials of the goddess, the atrienses * of her hall—you are worthy to enter into the penetralia. I henceforth will be your priest, your guide, and you who now curse my friendship shall live to bless it."

The young man lifted up his head and gazed with a vacant and wondering stare upon the Egyptian.

"Listen to me," continued Arbaces, in an earnest and solemn voice, casting first his searching eyes around to see that they were still alone. "From Egypt came all the knowledge of the world; from Egypt came the lore of Athens, and the profound policy of Crete; from Egypt came those early and mysterious tribes which (long before the hordes of Romulus swept over the plains of Italy, and in the eternal cycle of events drove back civilization into barbarism and darkness), possessed all the arts of wisdom and the graces of intellectual life. From Egypt came the rites and the grandeur of that solemn Cære, whose inhabitants taught their iron vanquishers of Rome all that they yet know of elevated in religion and sublime in worship. And how deemest thou, young man, that that dread Egypt, the mother of countless nations, achieved her greatness, and soared to her cloud-capt eminence of wisdom?—It was the result of a profound and holy policy. Your modern nations owe their greatness to Egypt—Egypt her greatness to her priests. Rapt in themselves, coveting a sway over the nobler part of man, his soul and his belief, those ancient ministers of God were inspired with the grandest thought that ever exalted mortals. From the revolutions of the stars, from the seasons of the earth, from the round and unvarying circle of human destinies, they devised an august allegory; they made it gross and palpable to the vulgar by the signs of gods and goddesses, and that which in reality was Government they named Religion. Isis is a fable—start not!—that for which Isis is a type is a reality, an immortal being; Isis is nothing. Nature, which she represents, is the mother of all things—dark, ancient, inscrutable, save to the gifted few. 'None among mortals hath ever lifted up my veil,' so saith the Isis that you adore; but to the wise that veil *hath* been removed, and we have stood face to face with the solemn loveliness of Nature. The priests then were the benefactors, the civilizers of mankind; true, they were also cheats, impostors if you will. But think you, young man, that if they had not deceived their kind they could have served them? The ignorant and servile vulgar must be blinded to attain to their proper good; they would not believe a maxim—they revere an oracle. The Emperor of Rome sways the vast and various tribes of earth, and harmonizes the conflicting and disunited elements; thence come peace, order, law, the blessings of life. Think you it is the man, the emperor, that thus sways?—no, it is the pomp, the awe, the majesty that surround him—*these* are his impostures, his delusions; our

* The slaves who had the care of the atrium.

oracles and our divinations, our rites and our ceremonies, are the means of *our* sovereignty and the engines of *our* power. They are the same means to the same end, the welfare and harmony of mankind. You listen to me rapt and intent—the light begins to dawn upon you."

Apæcides remained silent, but the changes rapidly passing over his speaking countenance betrayed the effect produced upon him by the words of the Egyptian—words made tenfold more eloquent by the voice, the aspect, and the manner of the man.

"While, then," resumed Arbaces, "our fathers of the Nile thus achieved the first elements by whose life chaos is destroyed, namely the obedience and reverence of the multitude for the few, they drew from their majestic and starred meditations that wisdom which was *no* delusion: they invented the codes and regularities of law—the arts and glories of existence. They asked belief; they returned the gift by civilization. Were not their very cheats a virtue! Trust me, whosoever in yon far heavens of a diviner and more beneficent nature look down upon our world, smile approvingly on the wisdom which has worked such ends. But you wish me to apply these generalities to yourself; I hasten to obey the wish. The altars of the goddess of our ancient faith must be served, and served too by others than the stolid and soulless things that are but as pegs and hooks whereon to hang the fillet and the robe. Remember two sayings of Sextus the Pythagorean, sayings borrowed from the lore of Egypt. The first is, 'Speak not of God to the multitude;' the second is, 'The man worthy of God is a god among men.' As Genius gave to the ministers of Egypt worship, that empire in late ages so fearfully decayed, thus by Genius only can the dominion be restored. I saw in you, Apæcides, a pupil worthy of my lessons—a minister worthy of the great ends which may yet be wrought: your energy, your talents, your purity of faith, your earnestness of enthusiasm, all fitted you for that calling which demands so imperiously high and ardent qualities: I fanned, therefore, your sacred desires; I stimulated you to the step you have taken. But you blame me that I did not reveal to you the little souls and the juggling tricks of your companions. Had I done so, Apæcides, I had defeated my own object: your noble nature would have at once revolted, and Isis would have lost her priest."

Apæcides groaned aloud. The Egyptian continued, without heeding the interruption.

"I placed you, therefore, without preparation, in the temple; I left you suddenly to discover and to be sickened by all those mummeries which dazzle the herd. I desired that you should perceive how those engines are moved by which the fountain that refreshes the world casts its waters in the air. It was the trial ordained of old to all our priests. They who accustom themselves to the impostures of the vulgar, are left to practice them;—for those like you, whose higher natures demand higher pursuit, religion opens more godlike secrets. I am pleased to find in you the character I had expected. You have taken the vows; you cannot recede. Advance—I will be your guide."

"And what wilt thou teach me, O singular and fearful man? New cheats—new—"

"No—I have thrown thee into the abyss of disbelief; I will lead thee now to the eminence of faith. Thou hast seen the false types: thou shalt learn now the realities they represent. There is no shadow, Apæcides, without its substance. Come to me this night. Your hand."

Impressed, excited, bewildered by the language of the Egyptian, Apæcides gave him his hand, and master and pupil parted.

It was true that for Apæcides there was no retreat. He had taken the vows of celibacy: he had devoted himself to a life that at present seemed to possess all the austerities of fanaticism, without any of the consolations of belief. It was natural that he should yet cling to a yearning desire to reconcile himself to an irrevocable career. The powerful and profound mind of the Egyptian yet claimed an empire over his young imagination; excited him with vague conjecture, and kept him alternately vibrating between hope and fear.

Meanwhile Arbaces pursued his slow and stately way to the house of Ione. As he entered the tablinum, he heard a voice from the porticos of the peristyle beyond, which, musical as it was, sounded displeasingly on his ear—it was the voice of the young and

beautiful Glaucus, and for the first time an involuntary thrill of jealousy shot through the breast of the Egyptian. On entering the peristyle, he found Glaucus seated by the side of Ione. The fountain in the odorous garden cast up its silver spray in the air, and kept a delicious coolness in the midst of the sultry noon. The handmaids, almost invariably attendant on Ione, who with her freedom of life preserved the most delicate modesty, sat at a little distance; by the feet of Glaucus lay the lyre on which he had been playing to Ione one of the Lesbian airs. The scene—the group before Arbaces, was stamped by that peculiar and refined ideality of poesy which we yet, not erroneously, imagine to be the distinction of the ancients,—the marble columns, the vases of flowers, the statue, white and tranquil, closing every vista; and, above all, the two living forms, from which a sculptor might have caught either inspiration or despair!

Arbaces, pausing for a moment, gazed on the pair with a brow from which all the usual stern serenity had fled; he recovered himself by an effort, and slowly approached them, but with a step so soft and echoless, that even the attendants heard him not; much less Ione and her lover.

"And yet," said Glaucus, "it is only before we love that we imagine that our poets have truly described the passion; the instant the sun rises, all the stars that had shone in his absence vanish into air. The poets exist only in the night of the heart; they are nothing to us when we feel the full glory of the god."

"A gentle and most glowing image, noble Glaucus."

Both started, and recognized behind the seat of Ione the cold and sarcastic face of the Egyptian.

"You are a sudden guest," said Glaucus, rising, and with a forced smile.

"So ought all to be who know they are welcome," returned Arbaces, seating himself, and motioning to Glaucus to do the same.

"I am glad," said Ione, "to see you at length together; for you are suited to each other, and you are formed to be friends."

"Give me back some fifteen years of life," replied the Egyptian, "before you can place me on an equality with Glaucus. Happy should I be to receive his friendship; but what can I give him in return? Can I make to him the same confidences that he would repose in me—of banquets and garlands—of Parthian steeds, and the chances of the dice? These pleasures suit his age, his nature, his career; they are not for mine."

So saying, the artful Egyptian looked down and sighed; but from the corner of his eye he stole a glance towards Ione, to see how she received these insinuations of the pursuits of her visitor. Her countenance did not satisfy him. Glaucus, slightly coloring, hastened gaily to reply. Nor was he, perhaps, without the wish in his turn to disconcert and abash the Egyptian.

"You are right, wise Arbaces," said he; "we can esteem each other, but we cannot be friends. My banquets lack the secret salt, which, according to rumor, gives such zest to your own. And, by Hercules! when I have reached your age, if I, like you, may think it wise to pursue the pleasures of manhood, like you I shall be doubtless sarcastic on the gallantries of youth."

The Egyptian raised his eyes to Glaucus with a sudden and piercing glance.

"I do not understand you," said he, coldly; "but it is the custom to consider that wit lies in obscurity." He turned from Glaucus as he spoke, with a scarcely perceptible sneer of contempt, and after a moment's pause addressed himself to Ione. "I have not, beautiful Ione," said he, "been fortunate enough to find you within doors the last two or three times that I have visited your vestibule."

"The smoothness of the sea has tempted me much from home," replied Ione, with a little embarrassment.

The embarrassment did not escape Arbaces; but, without seeming to heed it, he replied with a smile: "You know the old poet says, that 'Women should keep within doors, and there converse.'" *

"The poet was a cynic," said Glaucus, "and hated women."

"He spake according to the customs of his country, and that country is your boasted Greece."

"To different periods different customs.

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* Euripides.

Had our forefathers known Ione, they had made a different law."

"Did you learn these pretty gallantries at Rome?" said Arbaces, with ill-suppressed emotion.

"One certainly would not go for gallantries to Egypt," retorted Glaucus, playing carelessly with his chain.

"Come, come," said Ione, hastening to interrupt a conversation which she saw, to her great distress, was so little likely to cement the intimacy she had desired to effect between Glaucus and her friend, "Arbaces must not be so hard upon his poor pupil. An orphan, and without a mother's care, I may be to blame for the independent and almost masculine liberty of life that I have chosen: yet it is not greater than the Roman women are accustomed to—it is not greater than the Grecian ought to be. Alas! is it only to be among *men* that freedom and virtue are to be deemed united? Why should the slavery that destroys you be considered the only method to preserve us? Ah! believe me, it has been the great error of men—and one that has worked bitterly on their destinies—to imagine that the nature of women is (I will not say inferior, that may be so, but) so different from their own, in making laws unfavorable to the intellectual advancement of women. Have they not, in so doing, made laws against their children, whom women are to rear?—against the husbands, of whom women are to be the friends, nay, sometimes the advisers?" Ione stopped short suddenly, and her face was suffused with the most enchanting blushes. She feared lest her enthusiasm had led her too far; yet she feared the austere Arbaces less than the courteous Glaucus, for she loved the last, and it was not the custom of the Greeks to allow their women (at least such of their women as they most honored) the same liberty and the same station as those of Italy enjoyed. She felt, therefore, a thrill of delight as Glaucus earnestly replied,—

"Ever mayst thou think thus, Ione—ever be your pure heart your unerring guide! Happy it had been for Greece, if she had given to the chaste the same intellectual charms that are so celebrated amongst the less worthy of her women. No state falls from freedom—from knowledge, while your sex smile only on the free, and by appreciating, encourage the wise."

Arbaces was silent, for it was neither his part to sanction the sentiment of Glaucus, nor to condemn that of Ione; and, after a short and embarrassed conversation, Glaucus took his leave of Ione.

When he was gone, Arbaces, drawing his seat nearer to the fair Neapolitan's, said in those bland and subdued tones, in which he knew so well how to veil the mingled art and fierceness of his character,—

"Think not, my sweet pupil, if so I may call you, that I wish to shackle that liberty you adorn while you assume: but which, if not greater, as you rightly observe, than that possessed by the Roman women, must at least be accompanied by great circumspection, when arrogated by one unmarried. Continue to draw crowds of the gay, the brilliant, the wise themselves, to your feet—continue to charm them with the conversation of an Aspasia, the music of an Erinna—but reflect, at least, on those censorious tongues which can so easily blight the tender reputation of a maiden; and while you provoke admiration, give, I beseech you, no victory to envy."

"What mean you, Arbaces?" said Ione, in an alarmed and trembling voice: "I know you are my friend, that you desire only my honor and my welfare. What is it you would say?"

"Your friend—ah, how sincerely! May I speak then as a friend, without reserve and without offence?"

"I beseech you do so."

"This young profligate, this Glaucus, how didst thou know him? Hast thou seen him often?'" And as Arbaces spoke, he fixed his gaze steadfastly upon Ione, as if he sought to penetrate into her soul.

Recoiling before that gaze, with a strange fear which she could not explain, the Neapolitan answered with confusion and hesitation,—"He was brought to my house as a countryman of my father's, and I may say of mine. I have known him only within this last week or so: but why these questions?"

"Forgive me," said Arbaces; "I thought you might have known him longer. Base insinuator that he is!"

"How! what mean you? Why that term?"

"It matters not: let me not rouse your indignation against one who does not deserve so grave an honor."

"I implore you speak. What has Glaucus insinuated? or rather, in what do you *suppose* he has offended?"

Smothering his resentment at the last part of Ione's question, Arbaces continued,—"You know his pursuits, his companions, his habits; the comissatio and the alea (the revel and the dice) make his occupation;—and amongst the associates of vice how can he dream of virtue?"

"Still you speak riddles. By the gods! I entreat you, say the worst at once."

"Well, then, it must be so. Know, my Ione, that it was but yesterday that Glaucus boasted openly—yes, in the public baths, of your love to him. He said it amused him to take advantage of it. Nay, I will do him justice, he praised your beauty. Who could deny it? But he laughed scornfully when his Clodius, or his Lepidus, asked him if he loved you enough for marriage, and when he purposed to adorn his door-posts with flowers?"

"Impossible! How heard you this base slander?"

"Nay, would you have me relate to you all the comments of the insolent coxcombs with which the story has circled through the town? Be assured that I myself disbelieved at first, and that I have now painfully been convinced by several ear-witnesses of the truth of what I have reluctantly told thee."

Ione sank back, and her face was whiter than the pillar against which she leaned for support.

"I own it vexed—it irritated me, to hear your name thus lightly pitched from lip to lip, like some mere dancing girl's fame. I hastened this morning to seek and to warn you. I found Glaucus here. I was stung from my self-possession. I could not conceal my feelings; nay, I was uncourteous in thy presence. Canst thou forgive thy friend, Ione?"

Ione placed her hand in his, but replied not.

"Think no more of this," said he; "but let it be a warning voice, to tell thee how much prudence thy lot requires. It cannot hurt thee, Ione, for a moment; for a gay thing like this could never have been honored by even a serious thought from Ione. These insults only wound when they come from one we love; far different indeed is he whom the lofty Ione shall stoop to love."

"Love!" muttered Ione, with an hysterical laugh. "Ay, indeed."

It is not without interest to observe in those remote times, and under a social system so widely different from the modern, the same small causes that ruffle and interrupt the "course of love," which operate so commonly at this day;—the same inventive jealousy, the same cunning slander, the same crafty and fabricated retailings of petty gossip, which so often now suffice to break the ties of the truest love, and counteract the tenor of circumstances most apparently propitious. When the bark sails on over the smoothest wave, the fable tells us of the diminutive fish that can cling to the keel and arrest its progress: so is it ever with the great passions of mankind; and we should paint life but ill if, even in times the most prodigal of romance, and of the romance of which we most largely avail ourselves, we did not also describe the mechanism of those trivial and household springs of mischief which we see every day at work in our chambers and at our hearths. It is in these, the lesser intrigues of life, that we mostly find ourselves at home with the past.

Most cunningly had the Egyptian appealed to Ione's ruling foible—most dexterously had he applied the poisoned dart to her pride. He fancied he had arrested what he hoped, from the shortness of the time she had known Glaucus, was, at most, but an incipient fancy; and hastening to change the subject, he now led her to talk of her brother. Their conversation did not last long. He left her, resolved not again to trust so much to absence, but to visit—to watch her—every day.

No sooner had his shadow glided from her presence, than woman's pride—her sex's dissimulation—deserted his intended victim, and the haughty Ione burst into passionate tears.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAY LIFE OF THE POMPEIAN LOUNGER.—A MINIATURE LIKENESS OF THE ROMAN BATHS.

When Glaucus left Ione he felt as if he trod upon air. In the interview with which he had just been blessed, he had for the first time gathered from her distinctly that his love was not unwelcome to, and would not be unrewarded by, her. This hope filled him with a rapture for which earth and heaven seemed too narrow to afford a vent. Unconscious of the sudden enemy he had left behind and forgetting not only his taunts but his very existence, Glaucus passed through the gay streets, repeating to himself, in the wantonness of joy, the music of the soft air to which Ione had listened with such intentness; and now he entered the Street of Fortune, with its raised footpath—its houses painted without, and the open doors admitting the view of the glowing frescos within. Each end of the street was adorned with a triumphal arch: and as Glaucus now came before the temple of Fortune, the jutting portico of that beautiful fane (which is supposed to have been built by one of the family of Cicero, perhaps by the orator himself) imparted a dignified and venerable feature to a scene otherwise more brilliant than lofty in its character. That temple was one of the most graceful specimens of Roman architecture. It was raised on a somewhat lofty podium; and between two flights of steps ascending to a platform stood the altar of the goddess. From this platform another flight of broad stairs led to the portico, from the height of whose fluted columns hung festoons of the richest flowers. On either side the extremities of the temple were placed statues of Grecian workmanship; and at a little distance from the temple rose the triumphal arch crowned with an equestrian statue of Caligula, which was flanked by trophies of bronze. In the space before the temple a lively throng were assembled—some seated on benches and discussing the politics of the empire, some conversing on the approaching spectacle of the amphitheatre. One knot of young men were lauding a new beauty, another discussing the merits of the last play; a third group, more stricken in age, were speculating on the chance of the trade with Alexandria, and amidst these were many merchants in the Eastern costume, whose loose and peculiar robes, painted and gemmed slippers, and composed and serious countenances, formed a striking contrast to the tunicked forms and animated gestures of the Italians. For that impatient and lively people had, as now, a language distinct from speech—a language of signs and motions inexpressibly significant and vivacious: their descendants retain it, and the learned Jorio hath written a most entertaining work upon that species of hieroglyphical gesticulation.

Sauntering through the crowd, Glaucus soon found himself amidst a group of his merry and dissipated friends.

"Ah!" said Sallust, "it is a lustrum since I saw you."

"And how have you spent the lustrum? What new dishes have you discovered?"

"I have been scientific," returned Sallust, "and have made some experiments in the feeding of lampreys: I confess I despair of bringing them to the perfection which our Roman ancestors attained."

"Miserable man! and why?"

"Because," returned Sallust, with a sigh, "it is no longer lawful to give them a slave to eat. I am very often tempted to make away with a very fat carptor (butler) whom I possess, and pop him slily into the reservoir. He would give the fish a most oleaginous flavor! But slaves are not slaves nowadays, and have no sympathy with their masters' interest—or Davus would destroy himself to oblige me!"

"What news from Rome?" said Lepidus, as he languidly joined the group.

"The emperor has been giving a splendid supper to the senators," answered Sallust.

"He is a good creature," quoth Lepidus; "they say he never sends a man away without granting his request."

"Perhaps he would let me kill a slave for my reservoir?" returned Sallust, eagerly.

"Not unlikely," said Glaucus; "for he who grants a favor to one Roman must always do it at the expense of another. Be sure, that for every smile Titus has caused, a hundred eyes have wept."

"Long live Titus!" cried Pansa, overhearing the emperor's name, as he swept patronizingly through the crowd; "he has promised my brother a quæstorship, because he had run through his fortune."

"And wishes now to enrich himself among the people, my Pansa," said Glaucus.

"Exactly so," said Pansa.

"That is putting the people to some use," said Glaucus.

"To be sure," returned Pansa. "Well, I must go and look after the ærarium—it is a little out of repair;" and followed by a long train of clients, distinguished from the rest of the throng by the togas they wore (for togas, once the sign of freedom in a citizen, were now the badge of servility to a patron), the ædile fidgeted fussily away.

"Poor Pansa!" said Lepidus: "he never has time for pleasure. Thank Heaven I am not an ædile!"

"Ah, Glaucus! how are you? gay as ever!" said Clodius, joining the group.

"Are you come to sacrifice to Fortune?" said Sallust.

"I sacrifice to her every night," returned the gamester.

"I do not doubt it. No man has made more victims!"

"By Hercules, a biting speech!" cried Glaucus, laughing.

"The dog's letter is never out of your mouth, Sallust," said Clodius, angrily: "you are always snarling."

"I may well have the dog's letter in my mouth, since, whenever I play with you, I have the dog's throw in my hand," returned Sallust.

"Hist!" said Glaucus, taking a rose from a flower-girl, who stood beside.

"The rose is the token of silence," replied Sallust; "but I love only to see it at the supper-table."

"Talking of that, Diomed gives a grand feast next week," said Sallust; "are you invited, Glaucus?"

"Yes; I received an invitation this morning."

"And I, too," said Sallust, drawing a square piece of papyrus from his girdle: "I see that he asks us an hour earlier than usual: an earnest of something sumptuous." *

"Oh! he is rich as Crœsus," said Clodius; "and his bill of fare is as long as an epic."

"Well, let us to the baths," said Glaucus: "this is the time when all the world is there; and Fulvius, whom you admire so much, is going to read us his last ode."

The young men assented readily to the proposal, and they strolled to the baths.

Although the public thermæ, or baths, were instituted rather for the poorer citizens than the wealthy (for the last had baths in their own houses), yet, to the crowds of all ranks who resorted to them, it was a favorite place for conversation, and for that indolent lounging so dear to a gay and thoughtless people. The baths at Pompeii differed, of course, in plan and construction from the vast and complicated thermæ of Rome; and, indeed, it seems that in each city of the empire there was always some slight modification of arrangement in the general architecture of the public baths. This mightily puzzles the learned,—as if architects and fashion were not capricious before the nineteenth century! Our party entered by the principal porch in the street of Fortune. At the wing of the portico sat the keeper of the baths, with his two boxes before him, one for the money he received, one for the tickets he dispensed. Round the walls of the portico were seats crowded with persons of all ranks; while others, as the regimen of the physicians prescribed, were walking briskly to and fro the portico, stopping every now and then to gaze on the innumerable notices of shows, games, sales, exhibitions, which were painted or inscribed upon the walls. The general subject of conversation was, however, the spectacle announced in the amphitheatre; and each new-comer was fastened upon by a group eager to know if Pompeii had been so fortunate as to produce some monstrous criminal, some happy case of sacrilege or of murder, which would allow the ædiles to provide a man for the jaws of the lion: all other more common exhibitions seemed dull and tame, when compared with the possibility of this fortunate occurrence.

"For my part," said one jolly-looking man, who was a goldsmith, "I think the em-

* The Romans sent tickets of invitation, like the moderns, specifying the hour of the repast; which if the intended feast was to be sumptuous, was earlier than usual.

peror, if he is as good as they say, might have sent us a Jew."

"Why not take one of the new sect of Nazarenes?" said a philosopher. "I am not cruel: but an atheist, one who denies Jupiter himself, deserves no mercy."

"I care not how many gods a man likes to believe in," said the goldsmith; "but to deny all gods is something monstrous."

"Yet I fancy," said Glaucus, "that these people are not absolutely atheists. I am told that they believe in a God—nay, in a future state."

"Quite a mistake, my dear Glaucus," said the philosopher. "I have conferred with them—they laughed in my face when I talked of Pluto and Hades."

"O ye gods!" exclaimed the goldsmith in horror; "are there any of these wretches in Pompeii?"

"I know there are a few; but they meet so privately that it is impossible to discover who they are."

As Glaucus turned away, a sculptor, who was a great enthusiast in his art, looked after him admiringly.

"Ah!" said he, "if we could get *him* on the arena—there would be a model for you! What limbs! what a head! he ought to have been a gladiator! A subject—a subject—worthy of our art! Why don't they give him to the lion?"

Meanwhile Fulvius, the Roman poet, whom his contemporaries declared immortal, and who, but for this history, would never have been heard of in our neglectful age, came eagerly up to Glaucus: "Oh, my Athenian, my Glaucus, you have come to hear my ode! That is indeed an honor; you, a Greek—to whom the very language of common life is poetry. How I thank you. It is but a trifle; but if I secure your approbation, perhaps I may get an introduction to Titus. Oh, Glaucus! a poet without a patron is an amphora without a label; the wine may be good, but nobody will laud it! And what says Pythagoras?—'Frankincense to the gods, but praise to man.' A patron, then, is the poet's priest; he procures him the incense, and obtains him his believers."

"But all Pompeii is your patron, and every portico an altar in your praise."

"Ah! the poor Pompeians are very civil—they love to honor merit. But they are only the inhabitants of a petty town—*spero meliora!* Shall we within?"

"Certainly; we lose time till we hear your poem."

At this instant there was a rush of some twenty persons from the baths into the portico; and a slave stationed at the door of a small corridor now admitted the poet, Glaucus, Clodius, and a troop of the bard's other friends, into the passage.

"A poor place this, compared with the Roman thermæ!" said Lepidus, disdainfully.

"Yet is there some taste in the ceiling," said Glaucus, who was in a mood to be pleased with everything; pointing to the stars which studded the roof.

Lepidus shrugged his shoulders, but was too languid to reply.

They now entered a somewhat spacious chamber, which served for the purposes of the apoditerium (that is, a place where the bathers prepared themselves for their luxurious ablutions). The vaulted ceiling was raised from a cornice, glowingly colored with motley and grotesque paintings; the ceiling itself was panelled in white compartments bordered with rich crimson; the unsullied and shining floor was paved with white mosaics, and along the walls were ranged benches for the accommodation of the loiterers. This chamber did not possess the numerous and spacious windows which Vitruvius attributes to his more magnificent *frigidarium.* The Pompeians, as all the southern Italians, were fond of banishing the light of their sultry skies, and combined in their voluptuous associations the idea of luxury with darkness. Two windows of glass* alone admitted the soft and shaded ray; and the compartment in which one of these casements was placed was adorned with a large relief of the destruction of the Titans.

In this apartment Fulvius seated himself with a magisterial air, and his audience gathering round him, encouraged him to commence his recital.

* The discoveries at Pompeii have controverted the long-established error of the antiquaries, that glass windows were unknown to the Romans—the use of them was not, however, common among the middle and inferior classes in their private dwellings.

The poet did not require much pressing. He drew forth from his vest a roll of papyrus, and after hemming three times, as much to command silence as to clear his voice, he began that wonderful ode, of which, to the great mortification of the author of this history, no single verse can be discovered.

By the plaudits he received, it was doubtless worthy of his fame; and Glaucus was the only listener who did not find it excel the best odes of Horace.

The poem concluded, those who took only the cold bath began to undress; they suspended their garments on hooks fastened in the wall, and receiving, according to their condition, either from their own slaves or those of the thermæ, loose robes in exchange, withdrew into that graceful and circular building which yet exists, to shame the unlaving posterity of the south.

The more luxurious departed by another door to the tepidarium, a place which was heated to a voluptuous warmth, partly by a moveable fireplace, principally by a suspended pavement, beneath which was conducted the caloric of the laconicum.

Here this portion of the intended bathers, after unrobing themselves, remained for some time enjoying the artificial warmth of the luxurious air. And this room, as befitted its important rank in the long process of ablution, was more richly and elaborately decorated than the rest; the arched roof was beautifully carved and painted; the windows above, of ground glass, admitted but wandering and uncertain rays; below the massive cornices were rows of figures in massive and bold relief; the walls glowed with crimson, the pavement was skilfully tessellated in white mosaics. Here the habituated bathers, men who bathed seven times a day, would remain in a state of enervate and speechless lassitude, either before, or (mostly) after the water-bath; and many of these victims of the pursuit of health turned their listless eyes on the new-comers, recognizing their friends with a nod, but dreading the fatigue of conversation.

From this place the party again diverged, according to their several fancies, some to the sudatorium, which answered the purpose of our vapor-baths, and thence to the warm-bath itself; those more accustomed to exercise, and capable of dispensing with so cheap a purchase of fatigue, resorted at once to the calidarium, or water-bath.

In order to complete this sketch, and give to the reader an adequate notion of this, the main luxury of the ancients, we will accompany Lepidus, who regularly underwent the whole process, save only the cold-bath, which had gone lately out of fashion. Being then gradually warmed in the tepidarium, which has just been described, the delicate steps of the Pompeian *élégant* were conducted to the sudatorium. Here let the reader depict to himself the gradual process of the vapor-bath, accompanied by an exhalation of spicy perfumes. After our bather had undergone this operation, he was seized by his slaves, who always awaited him at the baths, and the dews of heat were removed by a kind of scraper, which (by the way) a modern traveller has gravely declared to be used only to remove the dirt, not one particle of which could ever settle on the polished skin of the practised bather. Thence, somewhat cooled, he passed into the water-bath, over which fresh perfumes were profusely scattered, and on emerging from the opposite part of the room, a cooling shower played over his head and form. Then wrapping himself in a light robe, he returned once more to the tepidarium, where he found Glaucus, who had not encountered the sudatorium; and now, the main delight and extravagance of the bath commenced. Their slaves anointed the bathers from vials of gold, of alabaster, or of crystal, studded with profusest gems, and containing the rarest unguents gathered from all quarters of the world. The number of these smegmata used by the wealthy would fill a modern volume—especially if the volume were printed by a fashionable publisher; *Amoracinum, Megalium, Nardum—omne quod exit in um:* —while soft music played in an adjacent chamber, and such as used the bath in moderation, refreshed and restored by the grateful ceremony, conversed with all the zest and freshness of rejuvenated life.

"Blessed be he who invented baths!" said Glaucus, stretching himself along one of those bronze seats (then covered with soft cushions) which the visitor to Pompeii sees at this day in that same tepidarium. "Whether

he were Hercules or Bacchus, he deserved deification."

"But tell me," said a corpulent citizen, who was groaning and wheezing under the operation of being rubbed down, "tell me, O Glaucus!—evil chance to thy hands, O slave! why so rough?—tell me—ugh—ugh!—are the baths at Rome really so magnificent?" Glaucus turned, and recognized Diomed, though not without some difficulty, so red and so inflamed were the good man's cheeks by the sudatory and the scraping he had so lately undergone. "I fancy they must be a great deal finer than these. Eh?" Suppressing a smile, Glaucus replied—

"Imagine all Pompeii converted into baths, and you will then form a notion of the size of the imperial thermæ of Rome. But a notion of the *size* only. Imagine every entertainment for mind and body—enumerate all the gymnastic games our fathers invented—repeat all the books Italy and Greece have produced—suppose places for all these games, admirers for all these works—add to this, baths of the vastest size, the most complicated construction—intersperse the whole with gardens, with theatres, with porticos, with schools—suppose, in one word, a city of the gods, composed but of palaces and public edifices, and you may form some faint idea of the glories of the great baths of Rome."

"By Hercules!" said Diomed, opening his eyes, "why, it would take a man's whole life to bathe!"

"At Rome, it often does so," replied Glaucus, gravely. "There are many who live only at the baths. They repair there the first hour in which the doors are opened, and remain till that in which the doors are closed. They seem as if they knew nothing of the rest of Rome, as if they despised all other existence."

"By Pollux! you amaze me."

"Even those who bathe only thrice a-day contrive to consume their lives in this occupation. They take their exercise in the tennis-court or the porticos, to prepare them for the first bath; they lounge into the theatre, to refresh themselves after it. They take their prandium under the trees, and think over their second bath. By the time it is prepared, the prandium is digested. From the second bath they stroll into one of the peristyles, to hear some new poet recite; or into the library, to sleep over an old one. Then comes the supper, which they still consider but a part of the bath; and then a third time they bathe again, as the best place to converse with their friends."

"Per Hercle! but we have their imitators at Pompeii."

"Yes, and without their excuse. The magnificent voluptuaries of the Roman baths are happy; they see nothing but gorgeousness and splendor; they visit not the squalid parts of the city; they know not that there is poverty in the world. All Nature smiles for them, and her only frown is the last one which sends them to bathe in Cocytus. Believe me, they are your only true philosophers."

While Glaucus was thus conversing, Lepidus, with closed eyes and scarce perceptible breath, was undergoing all the mystic operations, not one of which he ever suffered his attendants to omit. After the perfumes and the unguents, they scattered over him the luxurious powder which prevented any farther accession of heat: and this being rubbed away by the smooth surface of the pumice, he began to indue, not the garments he had put off, but those more festive ones termed "the synthesis," with which the Romans marked their respect for the coming ceremony of supper, if rather, from its hour (three o'clock in our measurement of time), it might not be more fitly denominated dinner. This done, he at length opened his eyes and gave signs of returning life.

At the same time, too, Sallust betokened by a long yawn, the evidence of existence.

"It is supper-time," said the epicure; "you, Glaucus and Lepidus, come and sup with me."

"Recollect you are all three engaged to my house next week," cried Diomed, who was mightily proud of the acquaintance of men of fashion.

"Ah, ah! we recollect," said Sallust: "the seat of memory, my Diomed, is certainly in the stomach."

Passing now once again into the cooler air, and so into the street, our gallants of that day concluded the ceremony of a Pompeian bath.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES COGS HIS DICE WITH PLEASURE AND WINS THE GAME.

THE evening darkened over the restless city as Apæcides took his way to the house of the Egyptian. He avoided the more lighted and populous streets; and as he strode onward with his head buried in his bosom, and his arms folded within his robe, there was something startling in the contrast, which his solemn mien and wasted form presented to the thoughtless brows and animated air of those who occasionally crossed his path.

At length, however, a man of a more sober and staid demeanor, and who had twice passed him with a curious but doubting look, touched him on the shoulder.

"Apæcides!" said he, and he made a rapid sign with his hands: it was the sign of the cross.

"Well, Nazarene," replied the priest, and his pale face grew paler: "what wouldst thou?"

"Nay," returned the stranger, "I would not interrupt thy meditations; but the last time we met, I seemed not to be so unwelcome."

"You are not unwelcome, Olinthus; but I am sad and weary: nor am I able this evening to discuss with you those themes which are most acceptable to you."

"O backward of heart!" said Olinthus, with bitter fervor; "and art thou sad and weary, and wilt thou turn from the very springs that refresh and heal?"

"O earth!" cried the young priest, striking his breast passionately, "from what regions shall my eyes open to the true Olympus, where thy gods really dwell? Am I to believe with this man, that none whom for so many centuries my fathers worshipped have a being or a name? Am I to break down, as something blasphemous and profane, the very altars which I have deemed most sacred? or am I to think with Arbaces—what?"

He paused, and strode rapidly away in the impatience of a man who strives to get rid of himself. But the Nazarene was one of those hardy, vigorous, and enthusiastic men, by whom God in all times has worked the revolutions of earth, and those, above all, in the establishment and in the reformation of His own religion;—men who were formed to convert, because formed to endure. It is men of this mould whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays; in the fervor of belief they are inspired and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use; they force themselves into men's hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment. Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm; it is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus—it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.

Olinthus did not then suffer Apæcides thus easily to escape him. He overtook, and addressed him thus:—

"I do not wonder, Apæcides, that I distress you; that I shake all the elements of your mind: that you are lost in doubt; that you drift here and there in the vast ocean of uncertain and benighted thought. I wonder not at this, but bear with me a little; watch and pray,—the darkness shall vanish, the storm sleep, and God Himself, as He came of yore on the seas of Samaria, shall walk over the lulled billows, to the delivery of your soul. Ours is a religion jealous in its demands, but how infinitely prodigal in its gifts! It troubles you for an hour, it repays you by immortality."

"Such promises," said Apæcides, sullenly, "are the tricks by which man is ever gulled. Oh, glorious were the promises which led me to the shrine of Isis!"

"But," answered the Nazarene, "ask thy reason, can that religion be sound which outrages all morality? You are told to worship your gods. What are those gods, even according to yourselves? What their actions, what their attributes? Are they not all represented to you as the blackest of criminals? yet you are asked to serve them as the holiest of divinities. Jupiter himself is a parricide and an adulterer. What are the meaner deities but imitators of his vices? You are told not to murder, but you worship murderers; you are told not to commit adultery, and you make your prayers to an adulterer. Oh! what is this but a mockery

of the holiest part of man's nature, which is faith? Turn now to the God, the one, the true God, to whose shrine I would lead you. If He seem to you too sublime, too shadowy, for those human associations, those touching connections between Creator and creature, to which the weak heart clings—contemplate Him in his Son, who put on mortality like ourselves. His mortality is not indeed declared, like that of your fabled gods, by the vices of our nature, but by the practice of all its virtues. In Him are united the austerest morals with the tenderest affections. If He were but a mere man, He had been worthy to become a god. You honor Socrates—he has his sect, his disciples, his schools. But what are the doubtful virtues of the Athenian, to the bright, the undisputed, the active, the unceasing, the devoted holiness of Christ? I speak to you now only of His human character. He came in that as the pattern of future ages, to show us the form of virtue which Plato thirsted to see embodied. This was the true sacrifice that He made for man; but the halo that encircled his dying hour not only brightened earth, but opened to us the sight of heaven! You are touched—you are moved. God works in your heart. His Spirit is with you. Come, resist not the holy impulse; come at once—unhesitatingly. A few of us are now assembled to expound the word of God. Come, let me guide you to them. You are sad, you are weary. Listen, then, to the words of God;—'Come to me,' saith He, 'all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!'"

"I cannot now," said Apæcides; "another time."

"Now—now!" exclaimed Olinthus, earnestly, and clasping him by the arm.

But Apæcides, yet unprepared for the renunciation of that faith—that life, for which he had sacrificed so much, and still haunted by the promises of the Egyptian, extricated himself forcibly from the grasp, and feeling an effort necessary to conquer the irresolution which the eloquence of the Christian had begun to effect in his heated and feverish mind, he gathered up his robes, and fled away with a speed that defied pursuit.

Breathless and exhausted, he arrived at last in a remote and sequestered part of the city, and the lone house of the Egyptian stood before him. As he paused to recover himself, the moon emerged from a silver cloud, and shone full upon the walls of that mysterious habitation.

No other house was near—the darksome vines clustered far and wide in front of the building, and behind it rose a copse of lofty forest trees, sleeping in the melancholy moonlight; beyond stretched the dim outline of the distant hills, and amongst them the quiet crest of Vesuvius, not then so lofty as the traveller beholds it now.

Apæcides passed through the arching vines, and arrived at the broad and spacious portico. Before it, on either side of the steps, reposed the image of the Egyptian sphynx, and the moonlight gave an additional and yet more solemn calm to those large, and harmonious, and passionless features, in which the sculptors of that type of wisdom united so much of loveliness with awe; half way up the extremities of the steps darkened the green and massive foliage of the aloe, and the shadow of the eastern palm cast its long and unwaving boughs partially over the marble surface of the stairs.

Something there was in the stillness of the place, and the strange aspect of the sculptured sphynxes, which thrilled the blood of the priest with a nameless and ghostly fear, and he longed even for an echo to his noiseless steps as he ascended to the threshold.

He knocked at the door, over which was wrought an inscription in characters unfamiliar to his eyes; it opened without a sound, and a tall Ethiopian slave, without question or salutation, motioned to him to proceed.

The wide hall was lighted by lofty candelabra of elaborate bronze, and round the walls were wrought vast hieroglyphics, in dark and solemn colors, which contrasted strangely with the bright hues and graceful shapes with which the inhabitants of Italy decorated their abodes. At the extremity of the hall, a slave, whose countenance, though not African, was darker by many shades than the usual color of the south, advanced to meet him.

"I seek Arbaces," said the priest; but his voice trembled even in his own ear. The

slave bowed his head in silence, and leading Apæcides to a wing without the hall, conducted him up a narrow staircase, and then traversing several rooms, in which the stern and thoughtful beauty of the sphynx still made the chief and most impressive object of the priest's notice, Apæcides found himself in a dim and half-lighted chamber, in the presence of the Egyptian.

Arbaces was seated before a small table, on which lay unfolded several scrolls of papyrus, impressed with the same character as that on the threshold of the mansion. A small tripod stood at a little distance, from the incense in which the smoke slowly rose. Near this was a vast globe, depicting the signs of heaven; and upon another table lay several instruments, of curious and quaint shape, whose uses were unknown to Apæcides. The farther extremity of the room was concealed by a curtain, and the oblong window in the roof admitted the rays of the moon, mingling sadly with the single lamp which burned in the apartment.

"Seat yourself, Apæcides," said the Egyptian, without rising.

The young man obeyed.

"You ask me," resumed Arbaces, after a short pause, in which he seemed absorbed in thought,—"You ask me, or would do so, the mightiest secrets which the soul of man is fitted to receive; it is the enigma of life itself that you desire me to solve. Placed like children in the dark, and but for a little while, in this dim and confined existence, we shape out spectres in the obscurity; our thoughts now sink back into ourselves in terror, now wildly plunge themselves into the guideless gloom, guessing what it may contain;—stretching our helpless hands here and there, lest, blindly, we stumble upon some hidden dangers; not knowing the limits of our boundary, now feeling them suffocate us with compression, now seeing them extend far away till they vanish into eternity. In this state all wisdom consists necessarily in the solution of two questions—'What are we to believe? and, What are we to reject?' These questions you desire me to decide?"

Apæcides bowed his head in assent.

"Man *must* have some belief," continued the Egyptian, in a tone of sadness. "He must fasten his hope to something: it is our common nature that you inherit when, aghast and terrified to see that in which you have been taught to place your faith swept away, you float over a dreary and shoreless sea of incertitude, you cry for help, you ask for some plank to cling to, some land, however dim and distant, to attain. Well, then, listen. You have not forgotten our conversation of to-day?"

"Forgotten!"

"I confessed to you that those deities, for whom smoke so many altars, were but inventions. I confessed to you that our rites and ceremonies were but mummeries, to delude and lure the herd to their proper good. I explained to you that from those delusions came the bonds of society, the harmony of the world, the power of the wise; that power is in the obedience of the vulgar. Continue we then these salutary delusions—if man must have some belief, continue to him that which his fathers have made dear to him, and which custom sanctifies and strengthens. In seeking a subtler faith for us, whose senses are too spiritual for the gross one, let us leave others that support which crumbles from ourselves. This is wise—it is benevolent."

"Proceed."

"This being settled," resumed the Egyptian, "the old land-marks being left uninjured for those whom we are about to desert, we gird up our loins and depart to new climes of faith. Dismiss at once from your recollection, from your thought, all that you have believed before. Suppose the mind a blank, an unwritten scroll, fit to receive impressions for the first time. Look round the world—observe its order—its regularity—its design. Something must have created it—the design speaks a designer: in that certainty we first touch land. But what is that something?—A god, you cry. Stay—no confused and confusing names. Of that which created the world, we know, we can know, nothing, save these attributes—power and unvarying regularity;—stern, crushing, relentless regularity—heeding no individual cases—rolling—sweeping—burning on;—no matter what scattered hearts, severed from the general mass, fall ground and scorched beneath its wheels. The mixture of evil with good—the existence of suffering and of crime—in

all times have perplexed the wise. They created a god—they supposed him benevolent. How then came this evil? why did he permit—nay, why invent, why perpetuate it? To account for this, the Persian creates a second spirit, whose nature is evil, and supposes a continual war between that and the god of good. In our own shadowy and tremendous Typhon, the Egyptians image a similar demon. Perplexing blunder that yet more bewilders us!—folly that arose from the vain delusion that makes a palpable, a corporeal, a human being, of this unknown power—that clothes the Invisible with attributes and a nature similar to the Seen. No: to this designer let us give a name that does not command our bewildering associations, and the mystery becomes more clear—that name is NECESSITY. Necessity, say the Greeks, compels the gods. Then why the gods?—their agency becomes unnecessary—dismiss them at once. Necessity is the ruler of all we see;—power, regularity—these two qualities make its nature. Would you ask more?—you can learn nothing: whether it be eternal—whether it compel us, its creatures, to new careers after that darkness which we call death—we cannot tell. There leave we this ancient, unseen, unfathomable power, and come to that which, to our eyes, is the great minister of its functions.

"This we can task more, from this we can learn more: its evidence is around us—its name is NATURE. The error of the sages has been to direct their researches to the attributes of Necessity, where all is gloom and blindness. Had they confined their researches to Nature—what of knowledge might we not already have achieved? Here patience, examination, are never directed in vain. We see what we explore; our minds ascend a palpable ladder of causes and effects. Nature is the great agent of the external universe, and Necessity imposes upon it the laws by which it acts, and imparts to us the powers by which we examine; those powers are curiosity and memory—their union is reason, their perfection is wisdom. Well, then, I examine by the help of these powers this inexhaustible Nature. I examine the earth, the air, the ocean, the heaven; I find that all have a mystic sympathy with each other—that the moon sways the tides—that the air maintains the earth, and is the medium of the life and sense of things—that by the knowledge of the stars we measure the limits of the earth—that we portion out the epochs of time—that by their pale light we are guided into the abyss of the past—that in their solemn lore we discern the destinies of the future. And thus, while we know not that which Necessity is, we learn, at least, her decrees. And now, what morality do we glean from this religion?—for religion it is. I believe in two deities, Nature and Necessity; I worship the last by reverence, the first by investigation. What is the morality my religion teaches? This—all things are subject but to general rules; the sun shines for the joy of the many—it may bring sorrow to the few; the night sheds sleep on the multitude—but it harbors murder as well as rest; the forests adorn the earth—but shelter the serpent and the lion; the ocean supports a thousand barks—but it engulfs the one. It is only thus for the general, and not for the universal benefit, that Nature acts, and Necessity speeds on her awful course. This is the morality of the dread agents of the world—it is mine, who am their creature. I would preserve the delusions of priestcraft, for they are serviceable to the multitude; I would impart to man the arts I discover, the sciences I perfect; I would speed the vast career of civilizing lore:—in this I serve the mass, I fulfil the general law, I execute the great moral that Nature preaches. For myself I claim the individual exception; I claim it for the wise—satisfied that my individual actions are nothing in the great balance of good and evil; satisfied that the product of my knowledge can give greater blessings to the mass than my desires can operate evil on the few (for the first can extend to remotest regions and humanize nations yet unborn), I give to the world wisdom, to myself freedom. I enlighten the lives of others, and I enjoy my own. Yes; our wisdom is eternal, but our life is short: make the most of it while it lasts. Surrender thy youth to pleasure, and thy senses to delight. Soon comes the hour when the wine cup is shattered, and the garlands shall cease to bloom. Enjoy while you may. Be still, O Apæcides, my pupil and my follower? I will teach thee the mechan-

ism of Nature, her darkest and her wildest secrets—the lore which fools call magic—and the mighty mysteries of the stars. By this shalt thou discharge thy duty to the mass; by this shalt thou enlighten thy race. But I will lead thee also to pleasures of which the vulgar do not dream; and the day which thou givest to men shall be followed by the sweet night which thou surrenderest to thyself."

As the Egyptian ceased there rose about, around, beneath, the softest music that Lydia ever taught, or Ionia ever perfected. It came like a stream of sound, bathing the senses unawares; enervating, subduing with delight. It seemed the melodies of invisible spirits, such as the shepherd might have heard in the golden age, floating through the vales of Thessaly, or in the noontide glades of Paphos. The words which had rushed to the lip of Apæcides, in answer to the sophistries of the Egyptian, died tremblingly away. He felt it as a profanation to break upon that enchanted strain—the susceptibility of his excited nature, the Greek softness and ardor of his secret soul, were swayed and captured by surprise. He sank on the seat with parted lips and thirsting ear; while in a chorus of voices, bland and melting as those which waked Psyche in the halls of Love, rose the following song:—

THE HYMN OF EROS.

"By the cool banks where soft Cephisus flows,
A voice sail'd trembling down the waves of air;
The leaves blush'd brighter in the Teian's rose,
The doves couch'd breathless in their summer lair;

"While from their hands the purple flowerets fell,
The laughing Hours stood listening in the sky;—
From Pan's green cave to Ægle's * haunted cell,
Heaved the charm'd earth in one delicious sigh.

"'Love, sons of earth! I am the Power of Love,
Eldest of all the gods with Chaos † born;
My smile sheds light along the courts above,
My kisses wake the eyelids of the Morn.

"'Mine are the stars—there, ever as ye gaze,
Ye meet the deep spell of my haunting eyes;
Mine is the moon—and mournful if her rays,
'Tis that she lingers where her Carian lies.

"'The flowers are mine—the blushes of the rose,
The violet charming Zephyr to the shade;
Mine the quick light that in the Maybeam glows,
And mine the day-dream in the lonely glade.

"'Love, sons of earth—for love is earth's soft lore,
Look where ye will—earth overflows with ME;
Learn from the waves that ever kiss the shore,
And the winds nestling on the heaving sea.

"'All teaches love!'—The sweet voice, like a dream,
Melted in light; yet still the airs above,
The waving sedges and the whispering stream,
And the green forest rustling, murmur'd 'LOVE!'"

As the voices died away, the Egyptian seized the hand of Apæcides, and led him, wandering, intoxicated, yet half-reluctant, across the chamber towards the curtain at the far end; and now, from behind that curtain, there seemed to burst a thousand sparkling stars; the veil itself, hitherto dark, was now lighted by these fires behind into the tenderest blue of heaven. It represented heaven itself—such a heaven, as in the nights of June might have shone down over the streams of Castaly. Here and there were painted rosy and aërial clouds, from which smiled, by the limner's art, faces of divinest beauty, and on which reposed the shapes of which Phidias and Apelles dreamed. And the stars which studded the transparent azure rolled rapidly as they shone, while the music that again woke with a livelier and lighter sound, seemed to imitate the melody of the joyous spheres.

"Oh! what miracle is this, Arbaces?" said Apæcides, in faltering accents. "After having denied the gods, art thou about to reveal to me——"

"Their pleasures!" interrupted Arbaces, in a tone so different from its usual cold and tranquil harmony that Apæcides started, and thought the Egyptian himself transformed; and now, as they neared the curtain, a wild—a loud—an exulting melody burst from behind its concealment. With that sound the veil was rent in twain— it parted—it seemed to vanish into air: and a scene, which no Sybarite ever more than rivalled, broke upon the dazzled gaze of the youthful priest. A vast banquet-room stretched beyond, blazing with countless lights, which filled the warm air with the scents of frankincense, of jasmine, of violets, of myrrh; all that the most odorous flowers, all that the most costly spices could distil, seemed gathered into one ineffable and ambrosial essence: from the light columns that sprang upwards

* The fairest of the Naiads.
† Hesiod.

to the airy roof, hung draperies of white, studded with golden stars. At the extremities of the room two fountains cast up a spray, which, catching the rays of the roseate light, glittered like countless diamonds. In the centre of the room as they entered there rose slowly from the floor, to the sound of unseen minstrelsy, a table spread with all the viands which sense ever devoted to fancy, and vases of that lost Myrrhine fabric,* so glowing in its colors, so transparent in its material, were crowned with the exotics of the East. The couches, to which this table was the centre, were covered with tapestries of azure and gold; and from invisible tubes in the vaulted roof descended showers of fragrant waters, that cooled the delicious air, and contended with the lamps as if the spirits of wave and fire disputed which element could furnish forth the most delicious odors. And now, from behind the snowy draperies, trooped such forms as Adonis beheld when he lay on the lap of Venus. They came, some with garlands, others with lyres; they surrounded the youth, they led his steps to the banquet. They flung the chaplets round him in rosy chains. The earth—the thought of earth, vanished from his soul. He imagined himself in a dream, and suppressed his breath lest he should wake too soon; the senses, to which he had never yielded as yet, beat in his burning pulse, and confused his dizzy and reeling sight. And while thus amazed and lost, once again, but in brisk and Bacchic measures, rose the magic strain:—

ANACREONTIC.

"In the veins of the calix foams and glows
The blood of the mantling vine,
But oh! in the bowl of Youth there glows
A Lesbium, more divine!
Bright, bright,
As the liquid light,
Its waves through thine eyelids shine!

"Fill up, fill up, to the sparkling brim,
The juice of the young Lyæus;†
The grape is the key that we owe to him,
From the jail of the world to free us.
Drink, drink!
What need to shrink,
When the lamps alone can see us?

"Drink, drink, as I quaff from thine eyes,
The wine of a softer tree;
Give the smiles to the god of the grape—thy sighs,
Beloved one, give to me.
Turn, turn,
My glances burn,
And thirst for a look from thee!"

As the song ended, a group of three maidens, entwined with a chain of starred flowers, and who, while they imitated, might have shamed the Graces, advanced towards him in the gliding measures of the Ionian dance: such as the Nereids wreathed in moonlight on the yellow sands of the Ægean wave—such as Cytherea taught her handmaids in the marriage-feast of Psyche and her son.

Now approaching, they wreathed their chaplet round his head; now kneeling, the youngest of the three proffered him the bowl, from which the wine of Lesbos foamed and sparkled. The youth resisted no more, he grasped the intoxicating cup, the blood mantled fiercely through his veins. He sank upon the breast of the nymph who sat beside him, and turning with swimming eyes to seek for Arbaces, whom he had lost in the whorl of his emotions, he beheld him seated beneath a canopy at the upper end of the table, and gazing upon him with a smile that encouraged him to pleasure. He beheld him, but not as he had hitherto seen, with dark and sable garments, with a brooding and solemn brow: a robe that dazzled the sight, so studded was its whitest surface with gold and gems, blazed upon his majestic form; white roses, alternated with the emerald and the ruby, and shaped tiara-like, crowned his raven locks. He appeared, like Ulysses, to have gained the glory of a second youth—his features seemed to have exchanged thought for beauty, and he towered amidst the loveliness that surrounded him, in all the beaming and relaxing benignity of the Olympian god.

"Drink, feast, love, my pupil!" said he; "blush not that thou art passionate and young. That which thou art, thou feelest in thy veins; that which thou shalt be, survey!"

With this he pointed to a recess, and the eyes of Apæcides, following the gesture, beheld on a pedestal, placed between the

* Which, however, was possibly the porcelain of China,—though this is a matter which admits of considerable dispute.

† Name of Bacchus from λυω, to unbind, to release.

statues of Bacchus and Idalia, the form of a skeleton.

"Start not," resumed the Egyptian; "that friendly guest admonishes us but of the shortness of life. From its jaws I hear a voice that summons us to ENJOY."

As he spoke, a group of nymphs surrounded the statue; they laid chaplets on its pedestal, and, while the cups were emptied and refilled at that glowing board, they sang the following strain:—

BACCHIC HYMNS TO THE IMAGE OF DEATH.

I.

"Thou art in the land of the shadowy Host,
Thou that didst drink and love:
By the Solemn River, a gliding ghost,
But thy thought is ours above!
If memory yet can fly,
Back to the golden sky,
And mourn the pleasures lost!
By the ruin'd hall these flowers we lay,
Where thy soul once held its palace;
When the rose to thy scent and sight was gay,
And the smile was in the chalice,
And the cithara's silver voice
Could bid thy heart rejoice
When night eclipsed the day."

Here a new group advancing, turned the tide of the music into a quicker and more joyous strain:—

II.

"Death, death, is the gloomy shore,
Where we all sail—
Soft, soft, thou gliding oar;
Blow soft, sweet gale!
Chain with bright wreaths the Hours;
Victims if all,
Ever, 'mid song and flowers,
Victims should fall!"

Pausing for a moment, yet quicker and quicker danced the silver-footed music:—

"Since Life's so short, we'll live to laugh;
Ah! wherefore waste a minute!
If youth's the cup we yet can quaff,
Be love the pearl within it!"

A third band now approached with brimming cups, which they poured in libation upon that strange altar; and once more, slow and solemn, rose the changeful melody:—

III.

"Thou art welcome, Guest of gloom,
From the far and fearful sea!
When the last rose sheds its bloom,
Our board shall be spread with thee!
All hail, dark Guest!
Who hath so fair a plea
Our welcome Guest to be,
As thou, whose solemn hall
At last shall feast us all
In the dim and dismal coast?
Long yet be *we* the Host!
And thou, Dead Shadow, thou,
All joyless though thy brow,
Thou—but our passing *Guest!*"

At this moment, she who sat beside Apæcides suddenly took up the song:—

IV.

"Happy is yet our doom,
The earth and the sun are ours!
And far from the dreary tomb
Speed the wings of the rosy Hours—
Sweet is for thee the bowl,
Sweet are thy looks, my love:
I fly to thy tender soul,
As the bird to its mated dove:
Take me, ah take!
Clasp'd to thy guardian breast,
Soft let me sink to rest;
But wake me—ah, wake!
And tell me with words and sighs,
But more with thy melting eyes,
That my sun is not set—
That the Torch is not quench'd at the Urn,
That we love, and we breathe, and burn,
Tell me—thou lov'st me yet!"

BOOK THE SECOND.

"Lucus tremissit. Tota succusso solo
Nutavit aula, dubia quo pondus daret,
Ac fluctuanti similis."—SENECA: *Thyestes*, v. 600.

Trembled the grove. Earth quivered; with the shock
Quaked all the nodding hall, as doubtful where
Ponderous to fall,—and heaving like a wave.

CHAPTER I.

"A FLASH HOUSE" IN POMPEII—AND THE GENTLEMEN OF THE CLASSIC RING.

To one of those parts of Pompeii, which were tenanted not by the lords of pleasure, but by its minions and its victims; the haunt of gladiators and prize-fighters; of the vicious and the penniless; of the savage and the obscene; the Alsatia of an ancient city—we are now transported.

It was a large room, that opened at once on the confined and crowded lane. Before the threshold was a group of men, whose iron and well-strung muscles, whose short and Herculean necks, whose hardy and reckless countenances, indicated the champions of the arena. On a shelf, without the shop, were ranged jars of wine and oil; and right over this was inserted in the wall a coarse painting, which exhibited gladiators drinking—so ancient and so venerable is the custom of signs! Within the room were placed several small tables, arranged somewhat in the modern fashion of "boxes," and round these were seated several knots of men, some drinking, some playing at dice, some at that more skilful game called "*duodecim scriptæ*," which certain of the blundering learned have mistaken for chess, though it *rather*, perhaps, resembled backgammon of the two, and was usually, though not always, played by the assistance of dice. The hour was in the early forenoon, and nothing better, perhaps, than that unseasonable time itself denoted the habitual indolence of these tavern loungers. Yet, despite the situation of the house and the character of its inmates, it indicated none of that sordid squalor which would have characterized a similar haunt in a modern city. The gay disposition of all the Pompeians, who sought, at least, to gratify the sense even where they neglected the mind, was typified by the gaudy colors which decorated the walls, and the shapes, fantastic but not inelegant, in which the lamps, the drinking-cups, the commonest household utensils, were wrought.

"By Pollux!" said one of the gladiators, as he leaned against the wall of the threshold, "the wine thou sellest us, old Silenus,"—and as he spoke he slapped a portly personage on the back,—"is enough to thin the best blood in one's veins."

The man thus caressingly saluted, and whose bared arms, white apron, and keys and napkin tucked carelessly within his girdle, indicated him to be the host of the tavern, was already passed into the autumn of his years; but his form was still so robust and athletic, that he might have shamed even the sinewy shapes beside him, save that the muscle had seeded, as it were, into flesh, that the cheeks were swelled and bloated, and the increasing stomach threw into shade the vast and massive chest which rose above it.

"None of thy scurrilous blusterings with me," growled the gigantic landlord, in the

gentle semi-roar of an insulted tiger; "my wine is good enough for a carcase which shall so soon soak the dust of the spoliarium." *

"Croakest thou thus, old raven!" returned the gladiator, laughing scornfully; "thou shalt live to hang thyself with despite when thou seest me win the palm crown; and when I get the purse at the amphitheatre, as I certainly shall, my first vow to Hercules shall be to forswear thee and thy vile potations evermore."

"Hear to him — hear to this modest Pyrgopolinices! He has certainly served under Bombochides Cluninstaridysarchides," † cried the host. "Sporus, Niger, Tetraides, he declares he shall win the purse from you. Why, by the gods! each of your muscles is strong enough to stifle all his body, or *I* know nothing of the arena!"

"Ha!" said the gladiator, coloring with rising fury, "our lanista would tell a different story."

"What story could he tell against me, vain Lydon?" said Tetraides, frowning.

"Or me, who have conquered in fifteen fights?" said the gigantic Niger, stalking up to the gladiator.

"Or me?" grunted Sporus, with eyes of fire.

"Tush!" said Lydon, folding his arms, and regarding his rivals with a reckless air of defiance. "The time of trial will soon come; keep your valor till then."

"Ay, do," said the surly host; "and if I press down my thumb to save you, may the Fates cut my thread!"

"Your rope, you mean," said Lydon, sneeringly; "there is a sesterce to buy one."

The Titan wine-vender seized the hand extended to him, and griped it in so stern a vice that the blood spirted from the fingers' ends over the garments of the bystanders.

They set up a savage laugh.

"I will teach thee, young braggart, to play the Macedonian with me! I am no puny Persian, I warrant thee! What, man! have I not fought twenty years in the ring, and never lowered my arms once? And have I not received the rod from the editor's own hand as a sign of victory, and as a grace to retirement on my laurels? And am I now to be lectured by a boy?" So saying, he flung the hand from him in scorn.

Without changing a muscle, but with the same smiling face with which he had previously taunted mine host, did the gladiator brave the painful grasp he had undergone. But no sooner was his hand released, than, crouching for one moment as a wild cat crouches, you might see his hair bristle on his head and beard, and with a fierce and shrill yell he sprang on the throat of the giant, with an impetus that threw him, vast and sturdy as he was, from his balance;— and down, with the crash of a falling rock, he fell;—while over him fell also his ferocious foe.

Our host, perhaps, had had no need of the rope so kindly recommended to him by Lydon, had he remained three minutes longer in that position. But, summoned to his assistance by the noise of his fall, a woman, who had hitherto kept in an inner apartment, rushed to the scene of battle. This new ally was in herself a match for the gladiator; she was tall, lean, and with arms that could give other than soft embraces. In fact, the gentle helpmate of Burbo the wine-seller had, like himself, fought in the lists*—nay, under the emperor's eye. And Burbo himself— Burbo, the unconquered in the field, according to report, now and then yielded the palm to his soft Stratonice. This sweet creature no sooner saw the imminent peril that awaited her worse half, than, without other weapons than those with which Nature had provided her, she darted upon the incumbent gladiator, and, clasping him round the waist with her long and snakelike arms, lifted him by a sudden wrench from the body of her husband, leaving only his hands still clinging to the throat of his foe. So have we seen a dog snatched by the hind legs from the strife with a fallen rival in the arms of some envious groom; so have we seen one-half of him high in air—passive and offenceless—while the other half, head, teeth, eyes, claws, seemed buried and engulfed in the mangled

* The place to which the killed or mortally wounded were dragged from the arena.

† *Miles Gloriosus*, Act I.; as much as to say, in modern phrase. "He has served under Bombastes Furioso."

* Not only did women sometimes fight in the amphitheatres, but even those of noble birth participated in that meek ambition.

and prostrate enemy. Meanwhile the gladiators, lapped, and pampered, and glutted upon blood, crowded delightedly round the combatants—their nostrils distended—their lips grinning—their eyes gloatingly fixed on the bloody throat of the one, and the indented talons of the other.

"*Habet!* (he has got it!) *habet!*" cried they, with a sort of yell, rubbing their nervous hands.

"*Non* habeo, ye liars; I have not *got* it!" shouted the host, as with a mighty effort he wrenched himself from those deadly hands, and rose to his feet, breathless, panting, lacerated, bloody; and fronting, with reeling eyes, the glaring look and grinning teeth of his baffled foe, now struggling (but struggling with disdain) in the gripe of the sturdy amazon.

"Fair play!" cried the gladiators: "one to one;" and, crowding round Lydon and the woman, they separated our pleasing host from his courteous guest.

But Lydon, feeling ashamed at his present position, and endeavoring in vain to shake off the grasp of the virago, slipped his hand into his girdle, and drew forth a short knife. So menacing was his look, so brightly gleamed the blade, that Stratonice, who was used only to that fashion of battle which we moderns call the pugilistic, started back in alarm.

"O gods!" cried she; "the ruffian!—he has concealed weapons! Is that fair? Is that like a gentleman and a gladiator? No, indeed, I scorn such fellows!" With that she contemptuously turned her back on the gladiator, and hastened to examine the condition of her husband.

But he, as much inured to the constitutional exercises as an English bull-dog is to a contest with a more gentle antagonist, had already recovered himself. The purple hues receded from the crimson surface of his cheek, the veins of the forehead retired into their wonted size. He shook himself with a complacent grunt, satisfied that he was still alive, and then looking at his foe from head to foot with an air of more approbation than he had ever bestowed upon him before—

"By Castor!" said he, "thou art a stronger fellow than I took thee for! I see thou art a man of merit and virtue; give me thy hand, my hero!"

"Jolly old Burbo!" cried the gladiators, applauding; "stanch to the backbone. Give him thy hand, Lydon."

"Oh, to be sure," said the gladiator: "but now I have tasted his blood, I long to lap the whole."

"By Hercules!" returned the host, quite unmoved, "that is the true gladiator feeling. Pollux! to think what good training may make a man; why, a beast could not be fiercer!"

"A beast! O dullard! we beat the beasts hollow!" cried Tetraides.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, who was now employed in smoothing her hair and adjusting her dress, "if ye are all good friends again, I recommend you to be quiet and orderly; for some young noblemen, your patrons and backers, have sent to say they will come here to pay you a visit: they wish to see you more at their ease than at the schools, before they make up their bets on the great fight at the amphitheatre. So they always come to my house for that purpose: they know we only receive the best gladiators in Pompeii—our society is very select, praised be the gods!"

"Yes," continued Burbo, drinking off a bowl, or rather a pail of wine, "a man who has won my laurels can only encourage the brave. Lydon, drink, my boy; may you have an honorable old age like mine!"

"Come here," said Stratonice, drawing her husband to her affectionately by the ears, in that caress which Tibullus has so prettily described—"Come here!"

"Not so hard, she-wolf! thou art worse than the gladiator," murmured the huge jaws of Burbo.

"Hist!" said she, whispering him; "Calenus has just stole in, disguised, by the back way. I hope he has brought the sesterces."

"Ho! ho! I will join him," said Burbo; "meanwhile, I say, keep a sharp eye on the cups—attend to the score. Let them not cheat thee, wife; they are heroes, to be sure, but then they are arrant rogues: Cacus was nothing to them."

"Never fear me, fool!" was the conjugal reply; and Burbo, satisfied with the dear

assurance, strode through the apartment, and sought the penetralia of his house.

"So those soft patrons are coming to look at our muscles," said Niger. "Who sent to previse thee of it, my mistress?"

"Lepidus. He brings with him Clodius, the surest better in Pompeii, and the young Greek, Glaucus."

"A wager on a wager," cried Tetraides: "Clodius bets on me for twenty sesterces! What say you, Lydon?"

"He bets on *me!*" said Lydon.

"No, on *me!*" grunted Sporus.

"Dolts! do you think he would prefer any of you to Niger?" said the athletic, thus modestly naming himself.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, as she pierced a huge amphora for her guests, who had now seated themselves before one of the tables, "great men and brave, as ye all think yourselves, which of you will fight the Numidian lion in case no malefactor should be found to deprive you of the option?"

"I who have escaped your arms, stout Stratonice," said Lydon, "might safely, I think, encounter the lion."

"But tell me," said Tetraides, "where is that pretty young slave of yours—the blind girl, with bright eyes? I have not seen her a long time."

"Oh! she is too delicate for you, my son of Neptune,"* said the hostess, "and too nice even for us, I think. We send her into the town to sell flowers and sing to the ladies; she makes us more money so than she would by waiting on you. Besides, she has often other employments which lie under the rose."

"Other employments!" said Niger; "why, she is too young for them."

"Silence, beast!" said Stratonice; "you think there is no play but the Corinthian. If Nydia were twice the age she is at present, she would be equally fit for Vesta—poor girl!"

"But, hark ye, Stratonice," said Lydon; "how didst thou come by so gentle and delicate a slave? She were more meet for the handmaid of some rich matron of Rome than for thee."

"That is true," returned Stratonice; "and some day or other I shall make my fortune by selling her. How came I by Nydia, thou askest?"

"Ay."

"Why, thou seest, my slave Staphyla,—thou rememberest Staphyla, Niger?"

"Ay, a large-handed wench, with a face like a comic mask. How should I forget her, by Pluto, whose handmaid she doubtless is at this moment!"

"Tush, brute!—Well, Staphyla died one day, and a great loss she was to me, and I went into the market to buy me another slave. But, by the gods! they were all grown so dear since I had bought poor Staphyla, and money was so scarce, that I was about to leave the place in despair, when a merchant plucked me by the robe. 'Mistress,' said he, 'dost thou want a slave cheap? I have a child to sell—a bargain. She is but little, and almost an infant, it is true; but she is quick and quiet, docile and clever, sings well, and is of good blood, I assure you.' 'Of what country,' said I. 'Thessalian.' Now I knew the Thessalians were acute and gentle. So I said I would see the girl. I found her just as you see her now, scarcely smaller and scarcely younger in appearance. She looked patient and resigned enough, with her hands crossed on her bosom, and her eyes downcast. I asked the merchant his price: it was moderate, and I bought her at once. The merchant brought her to my house, and disappeared in an instant. Well, my friends, guess my astonishment when I found she was blind! Ha! ha! a clever fellow that merchant! I ran at once to the magistrates, but the rogue was already gone from Pompeii. So I was forced to go home in a very ill humor, I assure you; and the poor girl felt the effects of it too. But it was not her fault that she was blind, for she had been so from her birth. By degrees, we got reconciled to our purchase. True, she had not the strength of Staphyla, and was of very little use in the house, but she could soon find her way about the town, as well as if she had the eyes of Argus: and when one morning she brought us home a handful of sesterces, which she said she had got from selling some flowers she had gathered in our poor little garden, we thought the gods had sent her to us. So from that

* Son of Neptune; a Latin phrase for a boisterous, ferocious fellow.

time we let her go out as she likes, filling her basket with flowers, which she wreathes into garlands after the Thessalian fashion, which pleases the gallants; and the great people seem to take a fancy to her, for they always pay her more than they do any other flower-girl, and she brings all of it home to us, which is more than any other slave would do. So I work for myself, but I shall soon afford from her earnings to buy me a second Staphyla; doubtless, the Thessalian kidnapper had stolen the blind girl from gentle parents.* Besides her skill in the garlands, she sings and plays on the cithara, which also brings money; and lately —— but *that* is a secret."

"*That* is a secret! What!" cried Lydon; "art thou turned sphynx?"

"Sphynx, no—why sphynx?"

"Cease thy gabble, good mistress, and bring us our meat—I am hungry," said Sporus, impatiently.

"And I too," echoed the grim Niger, whetting his knife on the palm of his hand.

The amazon stalked away to the kitchen, and soon returned with a tray laden with large pieces of meat half-raw; for so, as now, did the heroes of the prize-fight imagine they best sustained their hardihood and ferocity; they drew round the table with the eyes of famished wolves—the meat vanished, the wine flowed. So leave we those important personages of classic life to follow the steps of Burbo.

CHAPTER II.

TWO WORTHIES.

In the earlier times of Rome the priesthood was a profession, not of lucre but of honor. It was embraced by the noblest citizens—it was forbidden to the plebeians. Afterwards, and long previous to the present date, it was equally open to all ranks; at least, that part of the profession which embraced the flamens, or priests,—not of religion generally, but of peculiar gods. Even the priest of Jupiter (the Flamen Dialis), preceded by a lictor, and entitled by his office to the entrance of the senate, at first the especial dignitary of the patricians, was subsequently the choice of the people. The less national and less honored deities were usually served by plebeian ministers; and many embraced the profession as now the Roman Catholic Christians enter the monastic fraternity, less from the impulse of devotion than the suggestions of a calculating poverty. Thus Calenus, the priest of Isis, was of the lowest origin. His relations, though not his parents, were freedmen. He had received from them a liberal education, and from his father a small patrimony, which he had soon exhausted. He embraced the priesthood as a last resource from distress. Whatever the state emoluments of the sacred profession, which at that time were probably small, the officers of a popular temple could never complain of the profits of their calling. There is no profession so lucrative as that which practices on the superstition of the multitude.

Calenus had but one surviving relative at Pompeii, and that was Burbo. Various dark and disreputable ties, stronger than those of blood, united together their hearts and interests; and often the minister of Isis stole disguised and furtively from the supposed austerity of his devotions;—and gliding through the back door of the retired gladiator, a man infamous alike by vices and by profession, rejoiced to throw off the last rag of an hypocrisy which, but for the dictates of avarice, his ruling passion, would at all times have sat clumsily upon a nature too brutal for even the mimicry of virtue.

Wrapped in one of those large mantles which came in use among the Romans in proportion as they dismissed the toga, whose ample folds well concealed the form, and in which a sort of hood (attached to it) afforded no less a security to the features, Calenus now sat in the small and private chamber of the wine-cellar, whence a small passage ran at once to that back entrance, with which nearly all the houses of Pompeii were furnished.

Opposite to him sat the sturdy Burbo, carefully counting on a table between them a little pile of coins which the priest had just

* The Thessalian slave-merchants were celebrated for purloining persons of birth and education; they did not always spare those of their own country. Aristophanes sneers bitterly at that people (proverbially treacherous) for their unquenchable desire of gain by this barter of flesh.

poured from his purse—for purses were as common then as now, with this difference—they were usually better furnished!

"You see," said Calenus, "that we pay you handsomely, and you ought to thank me for recommending you to so advantageous a market."

"I do, my cousin, I do," replied Burbo, affectionately, as he swept the coins into a leathern receptacle, which he then deposited in his girdle, drawing the buckle round his capacious waist more closely than he was wont to do in the lax hours of his domestic avocations. "And by Isis, Pisis, and Nisis, or whatever other gods there may be in Egypt, my little Nydia is a very Hesperides—a garden of gold to me."

"She sings well, and plays like a muse," returned Calenus; "those are virtues that he who employs me always pays liberally."

"He is a god," cried Burbo, enthusiastically; "every rich man who is generous deserves to be worshipped. But come, a cup of wine, old friend: tell me more about it. What does she do? she is frightened, talks of her oath, and reveals nothing."

"Nor will I, by my right hand! I, too, have taken that terrible oath of secrecy."

"Oath! what are oaths to men like us?"

"True, oaths of a common fashion; but this!"—and the stalwart priest shuddered as he spoke. "Yet," he continued, in emptying a huge cup of unmixed wine, "I will own to thee, that it is not so much the oath that I dread as the vengeance of him who proposed it. By the gods! he is a mighty sorcerer, and could draw my confession from the moon, did I dare to make it to her. Talk no more of this. By Pollux! wild as those banquets are which I enjoy with him, I am never quite at my ease there. I love, my boy, one jolly hour with thee, and one of the plain, unsophisticated, laughing girls that I meet in this chamber, all smoke-dried though it be, better than whole nights of those magnificent debauches."

"Ho! sayest thou so! To-morrow night, please the gods, we will have then a snug carousal."

"With all my heart," said the priest, rubbing his hands, and drawing himself nearer to the table.

At this moment they heard a slight noise at the door, as of one feeling the handle. The priest lowered the hood over his head.

"Tush!" whispered the host, "it is but the blind girl," as Nydia opened the door, and entered the apartment.

"Ho! girl, and how durst thou? thou lookest pale,—thou hast kept late revels? No matter, the young must be always the young," said Burbo, encouragingly.

The girl made no answer, but she dropped on one of the seats with an air of lassitude. Her color went and came rapidly; she beat the floor impatiently with her small feet, then she suddenly raised her face, and said with a determined voice,—

"Master, you may starve me if you will, —you may beat me,—you may threaten me with death,—but I will go no more to that unholy place!"

"How, fool!" said Burbo, in a savage voice, and his heavy brows met darkly over his fierce and blood-shot eyes; "how, rebellious! Take care."

"I have said it," said the poor girl, crossing her hands on her breast.

"What! my modest one, sweet vestal, thou wilt go no more? Very well, thou shalt be carried."

"I will raise the city with my cries," said she, passionately, and the color mounted to her brow.

"We will take care of that, too; thou shalt go gagged."

"Then may the gods help me!" said Nydia, rising; "I will appeal to the magistrates."

"*Thine oath, remember!*" said a hollow voice, as for the first time Calenus joined in the dialogue.

At those words a trembling shook the frame of the unfortunate girl; she clasped her hands imploringly. "Wretch that I am!" she cried, and burst violently into sobs.

Whether or not it was the sound of that vehement sorrow which brought the gentle Stratonice to the spot, her grisly form at this moment appeared in the chamber.

"How now? what hast thou been doing with my slave, brute?" said she, angrily, to Burbo.

"Be quiet, wife," said he, in a tone half-

sullen, half-timid; "you want new girdles and fine clothes, do you? Well then, take care of your slave, or you may want them long. *Væ capiti tuo*—vengeance on thy head, wretched one!"

"What it this?" said the hag, looking from one to the other.

Nydia started as by a sudden impulse from the wall against which she had leaned; she threw herself at the feet of Stratonice; she embraced her knees, and looking up at her with those sightless but touching eyes—

"O my mistress!" sobbed she, "you are a woman—you have had sisters,—you have been young like me,—feel for me,—save me! I will go to those horrible feasts no more!"

"Stuff!" said the hag, dragging her up rudely by one of those delicate hands, fit for no harsher labor than that of weaving the flowers which made her pleasure or her trade; —"stuff! these fine scruples are not for slaves."

"Hark ye," said Burbo, drawing forth his purse, and chinking its contents: "you hear this music, wife; by Pollux! if you do not break in yon colt with a tight rein, you will hear it no more."

"The girl is tired," said Stratonice, nodding to Calenus; "she will be more docile when you next want her."

"*You! you!* who is here?" cried Nydia, casting her eyes round the apartment with so fearful and straining a survey, that Calenus rose in alarm from his seat,—

"She *must* see with those eyes!" muttered he.

"Who is here! Speak, in heaven's name! Ah, if you were blind like me, you would be less cruel," said she, and she again burst into tears.

"Take her away," said Burbo, impatiently; "I hate these whimperings."

"Come!" said Stratonice, pushing the poor child by the shoulders.

Nydia drew herself aside, with an air to which resolution gave dignity.

"Hear me," she said; "I have served you faithfully,—I, who was brought up—Ah! my mother, my poor mother! didst thou dream I should come to this?" She dashed the tear from her eyes, and proceeded:—"Command me in aught else, and I will obey; but I tell you now, hard, stern, inexorable as you are,—I tell you that I will go there no more; or, if I am forced there, that I will implore the mercy of the prætor himself—I have said it. Hear me, ye gods, I swear!"

The hag's eyes glowed with fire; she seized the child by the hair with one hand, and raised on high the other—that formidable right hand, the least blow of which seemed capable to crush the frail and delicate form that trembled in her grasp. That thought itself appeared to strike her, for she suspended the blow, changed her purpose, and dragging Nydia to the wall, seized from a hook a rope, often, alas! applied to a similar purpose, and the next moment the shrill, the agonized shrieks of the blind girl, rang piercingly through the house.

CHAPTER III.

GLAUCUS MAKES A PURCHASE THAT AFTERWARDS COSTS HIM DEAR.

"Holla, my brave fellows!" said Lepidus, stooping his head, as he entered the low doorway of the house of Burbo. "We have come to see which of you most honors your lanista." The gladiators rose from the table in respect to three gallants known to be among the gayest and richest youths of Pompeii, and whose voices were therefore the dispensers of amphitheatrical reputation.

"What fine animals!" said Clodius to Glaucus: "worthy to be gladiators!"

"It is a pity they are not warriors," returned Glaucus.

A singular thing it was to see the dainty and fastidious Lepidus, whom in a banquet a ray of daylight seemed to blind,—whom in the bath a breeze of air seemed to blast,—in whom Nature seemed twisted and perverted from every natural impulse, and curdled into one dubious thing of effeminacy and art;—a singular thing was it to see this Lepidus, now all eagerness, and energy, and life, patting the vast shoulders of the gladiators with a blanched and girlish hand, feeling with a mincing gripe their great brawn and iron

muscles, all lost in calculating admiration at that manhood which he had spent his life in carefully banishing from himself.

So have we seen at this day the beardless flutterers of the saloons of London thronging round the heroes of the Fivescourt;—so have we seen them admire, and gaze, and calculate a bet;—so have we seen them meet together, in ludicrous yet in melancholy assemblage, the two extremes of civilized society,—the patrons of pleasure and its slaves—vilest of all slaves—at once ferocious and mercenary; male prostitutes, who sell their strength as women their beauty; beasts in act, but baser than beasts in motive, for the last, at least, do not mangle themselves for money!

"Ha! Niger, how will you fight?" said Lepidus; "and with whom?"

"Sporus challenges me," said the grim giant; "we shall fight to the death, I hope."

"Ah! to be sure," grunted Sporus, with a twinkle of his small eye.

"He takes the sword, I the net and the trident: it will be rare sport. I hope the survivor will have enough to keep up the dignity of the crown."

"Never fear, we'll fill the purse, my Hector," said Clodius: "let me see,—you fight against Niger? Glaucus, a bet—I back Niger."

"I told you so," cried Niger, exultingly. "The noble Clodius knows me; count yourself dead already, my Sporus."

Clodius took out his tablet.—"A bet,—ten sestertia.* What say you?"

"So be it," said Glaucus. "But whom have we here? I never saw this hero before;" and he glanced at Lydon, whose limbs were slighter than those of his companions, and who had something of grace, and something even of nobleness, in his face, which his profession had not yet wholly destroyed.

"It is Lydon, a youngster, practised only with the wooden sword as yet," answered Niger, condescendingly. "But he has the true blood in him, and has challenged Tetraides."

"*He* challenged *me*," said Lydon: "I accept the offer."

"And how do you fight?" asked Lepidus.

"Chut, my boy, wait awhile before you contend with Tetraides." Lydon smiled disdainfully.

"Is he a citizen or a slave?" said Clodius.

"A citizen;—we are all citizens here," quoth Niger.

"Stretch out your arm, my Lydon," said Lepidus, with the air of a connoisseur.

The gladiator, with a significant glance at his companions, extended an arm which, if not so huge in its girth as those of his comrades, was so firm in its muscles, so beautifully symmetrical in its proportions, that the three visitors uttered simultaneously an admiring exclamation.

"Well, man, what is your weapon?" said Clodius, tablet in hand.

"We are to fight first with the cestus; afterwards, if both survive, with swords," returned Tetraides, sharply, and with an envious scowl.

"With the cestus!" cried Glaucus; "there you are wrong, Lydon; the cestus is the Greek fashion: I know it well. You should have encouraged flesh for that contest; you are far too thin for it—avoid the cestus."

"I cannot," said Lydon.

"And why?"

"I have said—because he has challenged me."

"But he will not hold you to the precise weapon."

"My honor holds me!" returned Lydon, proudly.

"I bet on Tetraides, two to one, at the cestus," said Clodius; "shall it be, Lepidus?—even betting, with swords."

"If you give me three to one, I will not take the odds," said Lepidus; "Lydon will never come to the swords. You are mighty courteous."

"What say you, Glaucus?" said Clodius.

"I will take the odds three to one."

"Ten sestertia to thirty."

"Yes."*

Clodius wrote the bet in his book.

"Pardon me, noble sponsor mine," said Lydon, in a low voice to Glaucus: "but how much think you the victor will gain?"

* A little more than 80*l.*

* The reader will not confound the sester*tii* with the sester*tia*. A sester*tium*, which was a *sum*, not a *coin*, was a thousand times the value of a sester*tius*; the first was equivalent to 8*l.* 1*s.* 5 1-2*d.*, the last to 1*d.* 3 3-4 farthings of our money.

How much? why, perhaps seven sestertia."

"You are sure it will be as much?"

"At least. But out on you!—a Greek would have thought of the honor and not the money. O Italians! every where ye are Italians!"

A blush mantled over the bronzed cheek of the gladiator.

"Do not wrong me, noble Glaucus; I think of both, but I should never have been a gladiator but for the money."

"Base! mayest thou fall! A miser never was a hero."

"I am not a miser," said Lydon, haughtily, and he withdrew to the other end of the room.

"But I don't see Burbo; where is Burbo? I must talk with Burbo," cried Clodius.

"He is within," said Niger, pointing to the door at the extremity of the room.

"And Stratonice, the brave old lass, where is she?" quoth Lepidus.

"Why, she was here just before you entered; but she heard something that displeased her yonder, and vanished. Pollux! old Burbo had perhaps caught hold of some girl in the back room. I heard a female's voice crying out; the old dame is as jealous as Juno."

"Ho! excellent!" cried Lepidus, laughing. "Come, Clodius, let us go shares with Jupiter; perhaps he has caught a Leda."

At this moment a loud cry of pain and terror startled the group.

"Oh, spare me! spare me! I am but a child, I am blind,—is not *that* punishment enough?"

"O Pallas! I know that voice, it is my poor flower-girl!" exclaimed Glaucus, and he darted at once into the quarter whence the cry rose.

He burst the door; he beheld Nydia writhing in the grasp of the infuriate hag; the cord, already dabbled with blood, was raised in the air,—it was suddenly arrested.

"Fury!" said Glaucus, and with his left hand he caught Nydia from her grasp; "how dare you use thus a girl,—one of your own sex,—a child? My Nydia, my poor infant!"

"Oh! is that you—is that Glaucus?" exclaimed the flower-girl, in a tone almost of transport; the tears stood arrested on her cheek; she smiled, she clung to his breast, she kissed his robe as she clung.

"And how dare you, pert stranger! interfere between a free woman and her slave? By the gods! despite your fine tunic and your filthy perfumes, I doubt whether you are even a Roman citizen, my mannikin."

"Fair words, mistress,—fair words!" said Clodius, now entering with Lepidus. "This is my friend and sworn brother: he must be put under shelter of your tongue, sweet one; it rains stones!"

"Give me my slave!" shrieked the virago, placing her mighty grasp on the breast of the Greek.

"Not if all your sister Furies could help you," answered Glaucus. "Fear not, sweet Nydia; an Athenian never forsook distress!"

"Holla!" said Burbo, rising reluctantly, "what turmoil is all this about a slave? Let go the young gentleman, wife,—let him go: for his sake the pert thing shall be spared this once." So saying, he drew, or rather dragged off, his ferocious helpmate.

"Methought when we entered," said Clodius, "there was another man present?"

"He is gone."

For the priest of Isis had indeed thought it high time to vanish.

"Oh, a friend of mine! a brother cupman, a quiet dog, who does not love these snarlings," said Burbo, carelessly. "But go, child, you will tear the gentleman's tunic if you cling to him so tight; go, you are pardoned."

"Oh, do not—do not forsake me!" cried Nydia, clinging yet closer to the Athenian.

Moved by her forlorn situation, her appeal to him, her own innumerable and touching graces, the Greek seated himself on one of the rude chairs. He held her on his knees,—he wiped the blood from her shoulders with his long hair,—he kissed the tears from her cheeks,—he whispered to her a thousand of those soothing words with which we calm the grief of a child;—and so beautiful did he seem in his gentle and consoling task, that even the fierce heart of Stratonice was touched. His presence seemed to shed light over that base and obscene haunt,—young, beautiful, glorious, he was the emblem of all

that earth made most happy, comforting one that earth had abandoned!

"Well, who could have thought our blind Nydia had been so honored?" said the virago, wiping her heated brow.

Glaucus looked up at Burbo.

"My good man," said he, "this is your slave; she sings well, she is accustomed to the care of flowers,—I wish to make a present of such a slave to a lady. Will you sell her to me?" As he spoke he felt the whole frame of the poor girl tremble with delight; she started up, she put her dishevelled hair from her eyes, she looked around, as if, alas! she had the power to *see!*

"Sell our Nydia! no, indeed," said Stratonice, gruffly.

Nydia sank back with a long sigh, and again clasped the robe of her protector.

"Nonsense!" said Clodius, imperiously: "you must oblige me. What, man! what, old dame! offend me, and your trade is ruined. Is not Burbo my kinsman Pansa's client? Am I not the oracle of the amphitheatre and its heroes? If I say the word, Break up your wine-jars, you sell no more. Glaucus, the slave is yours."

Burbo scratched his huge head, in evident embarrassment.

"The girl is worth her weight in gold to me."

"Name your price, I am rich," said Glaucus.

The ancient Italians were like the modern, there was nothing they would not sell, much less a poor blind girl.

"I paid six sestertia for her, she is worth twelve now," muttered Stratonice.

"You shall have twenty; come to the magistrates at once, and then to my house for your money."

"I would not have sold the dear girl for a hundred but to oblige noble Clodius," said Burbo, whiningly. "And you will speak to Pansa about the place of *designator* at the amphitheatre, noble Clodius? it would just suit me."

"Thou shalt have it," said Clodius; adding, in a whisper to Burbo, "Yon Greek can make your fortune; money runs through him like a sieve; mark to-day with white chalk, my Priam."

"*An dabis?*" said Glaucus, in the formal question of sale and barter.

"*Dabitur*," answered Burbo.

"Then, then, I am to go with you,—with you? O happiness!" murmured Nydia.

"Pretty one, yes; and thy hardest task henceforth shall be to sing thy Grecian hymns to the loveliest lady in Pompeii."

The girl sprang from his clasp; a change came over her whole face, so bright the instant before; she sighed heavily, and then once more taking his hand, she said,—

"I thought I was to go to *your* house?"

"And so thou shalt for the present; come, we lose time."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVAL OF GLAUCUS PRESSES ONWARD IN THE RACE.

Ione was one of those brilliant characters which, but once or twice, flash across our career. She united in the highest perfection the rarest of earthly gifts,—Genius and Beauty. No one ever possessed superior intellectual qualities without knowing them,—the alliteration of modesty and merit is pretty enough, but where merit is great, the veil of that modesty you admire never disguises its extent from its possessor. It is the proud consciousness of certain qualities that it cannot reveal to the everyday world, that gives to genius that shy, and reserved, and troubled air, which puzzles and flatters you when you encounter it.

Ione, then, knew her genius; but, with that charming versatility that belongs of right to women, she had the faculty, so few of a kindred genius in the less malleable sex can claim—the faculty to bend and model her graceful intellect to all whom it encountered. The sparkling fountain threw its waters alike upon the strand, the cavern, and the flowers; it refreshed, it smiled, it dazzled every where. That pride, which is the necessary result of superiority, she wore easily—in her breast it concentred itself in independence. She pursued thus her own bright and solitary path. She asked no aged matron to direct and guide her,—she walked alone by the torch of her own unflickering purity. She obeyed no tyrannical and absolute custom. She

moulded custom to her own will, but this so delicately and with so feminine a grace, so perfect an exemption from error, that you could not say she *outraged* custom, but *commanded* it. The wealth of her graces was inexhaustible—she beautified the commonest action; a word, a look from her, seemed magic. Love her, and you entered into a new world, you passed from this trite and common-place earth. You were in a land in which your eyes saw every thing through an enchanted medium. In her presence you felt as if listening to exquisite music; you were steeped in that sentiment which has so little of earth in it, and which music so well inspires,—that intoxication which refines and exalts, which seizes, it is true, the senses, but gives them the character of the soul.

She was peculiarly formed, then, to command and fascinate the less ordinary and the bolder natures of men; to love her was to unite two passions, that of love and of ambition,—you aspired when you adored her. It was no wonder that she had completely chained and subdued the mysterious but burning soul of the Egyptian, a man in whom dwelt the fiercest passions. Her beauty and her soul alike enthralled him.

Set apart himself from the common world, he loved that daringness of character which also made itself, among common things, aloof and alone. He did not, or he would not see, that that very isolation put her yet more from him than from the vulgar. Far as the poles—far as the night from day, his solitude was divided from hers. He was solitary from his dark and solemn vices—she from her beautiful fancies and her purity of virtue.

If it was not strange that Ione thus enthralled the Egyptian, far less strange was it that she had captured, as suddenly as irrevocably, the bright and sunny heart of the Athenian. The gladness of a temperament which seemed woven from the beams of light had led Glaucus into pleasure. He obeyed no more vicious dictates when he wandered into the dissipations of his time, than the exhilarating voices of youth and health. He threw the brightness of his nature over every abyss and cavern through which he strayed. His imagination dazzled him, but his heart never was corrupted. Of far more penetration than his companions deemed, he saw that they sought to prey upon his riches and his youth; but he despised wealth save as the means of enjoyment, and youth was the great sympathy that united him to them. He felt, it is true, the impulse of nobler thoughts and higher aims than in pleasure could be indulged: but the world was one vast prison, to which the Sovereign of Rome was the Imperial jailer; and the very virtues, which in the free days of Athens would have made him ambitious, in the slavery of earth made him inactive and supine. For in that unnatural and bloated civilization, all that was noble in emulation was forbidden. Ambition in the regions of a despotic and luxurious court was but the contest of flattery and craft. Avarice had become the sole ambition,—men desired prætorships and provinces only as the license to pillage, and government was but the excuse of rapine. It is in small states that glory is most active and pure,—the more confined the limits of the circle, the more ardent the patriotism. In small states, opinion is concentrated and strong,—every eye reads your actions—your public motives are blended with your private ties,—every spot in your narrow sphere is crowded with forms familiar since your childhood,—the applause of your citizens is like the caresses of your friends. But in large states, the city is but the court: the provinces—unknown to you, unfamiliar in customs, perhaps in language, —have no claim on your patriotism, the ancestry of their inhabitants is not yours. In the court you desire favor instead of glory; at a distance from the court, public opinion has vanished from you, and self-interest has no counterpoise.

Italy, Italy, while I write your skies are over me—your seas flow beneath my feet, listen not to the blind policy which would unite all your crested cities, mourning for their republics, into one empire; false, pernicious delusion! your only hope of regeneration is in division. Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, may be free once more, if each is free. But dream not of freedom for the whole while you enslave the parts; the heart must be the centre of the system, the blood must circulate freely every where; and in vast communities you behold but a

bloated and feeble giant, whose brain is imbecile, whose limbs are dead, and who pays in disease and weakness the penalty of transcending the natural proportions of health and vigor.

Thus thrown back upon themselves, the more ardent qualities of Glaucus found no vent, save in that overflowing imagination which gave grace to pleasure and poetry to thought. Ease was less despicable than contention with parasites and slaves, and luxury could yet be refined though ambition could not be ennobled. But all that was best and brightest in his soul woke at once when he knew Ione. Here was an empire, worthy of demigods to attain; here was a glory, which the reeking smoke of a foul society could not soil or dim. Love, in every time, in every state, can thus find space for its golden altars. And tell me if there ever, even in the ages most favorable to glory, could be a triumph more exalted and elating than the conquest of one noble heart?

And whether it was that this sentiment inspired him, his ideas glowed more brightly, his soul seemed more awake and more visible, in Ione's presence. If natural to love her, it was natural that she should return the passion. Young, brilliant, eloquent, enamored, and Athenian, he was to her as the incarnation of the poetry of her father's land. They were not like creatures of a world in which strife and sorrow are the elements; they were like things to be seen only in the holiday of nature, so glorious and so fresh were their youth, their beauty, and their love. They seemed out of place in the harsh and every-day earth; they belonged of right to the Saturnian age, and the dreams of demigod and nymph. It was as if the poetry of life gathered and fed itself in them, and in their hearts were concentrated the last rays of the sun of Delos and of Greece.

But if Ione was independent in her choice of life, so was her modest pride proportionably vigilant and easily alarmed. The falsehood of the Egyptian was invented by a deep knowledge of her nature. The story of coarseness, of indelicacy, in Glaucus, stung her to the quick. She felt it a reproach upon her character and her career, a punishment above all to her love; she felt, for the first time, how suddenly she had yielded to that love; she blushed with shame at a weakness, the extent of which she was startled to perceive; she imagined it was that weakness which had incurred the contempt of Glaucus; she endured the bitterest curse of noble natures—*humiliation!* Yet her love, perhaps, was no less alarmed than her pride. If one moment she murmured reproaches upon Glaucus—if one moment she renounced, she almost hated him—at the next she burst into passionate tears, her heart yielded to its softness, and she said in the bitterness of anguish, "He despises me—he does not love me."

From the hour the Egyptian had left her, she had retired to her most secluded chamber, she had shut out her handmaids, she had denied herself to the crowds that besieged her door. Glaucus was excluded with the rest; he wondered, but he guessed not why! He never attributed to his Ione—his queen—his goddess—that womanlike caprice of which the love-poets of Italy so unceasingly complain. He imagined her, in the majesty of her candor, above all the arts that torture. He was troubled, but his hopes were not dimmed, for he knew already that he loved and was beloved; what more could he desire as an amulet against fear?

At deepest night, then, when the streets were hushed, and the high moon only beheld his devotions, he stole to that temple of his heart—her home;* and wooed her after the beautiful fashion of his country. He covered her threshold with the richest garlands, in which every flower was a volume of sweet passion; and he charmed the long summer night with the sound of the Lycian lute; and verses, which the inspiration of the moment sufficed to weave.

But the window above opened not; no smile made yet more holy the shining air of night. All was still and dark. He knew not if his verse was welcome and his suit was heard.

Yet Ione slept not, nor disdained to hear. Those soft strains ascended to her chamber; they soothed, they subdued her. While she listened, she believed nothing against her lover; but when they were stilled at last, and

* Athenæus—"The true temple of Cupid is the house of the beloved one."

his step departed, the spell ceased; and, in the bitterness of her soul, she almost conceived in that delicate flattery a new affront.

I said she was denied to all; but there was one exception, there was one person who would not be denied, assuming over her actions and her house something like the authority of a parent; Arbaces, for himself, claimed an exemption from all the ceremonies observed by others. He entered the threshold with the license of one who feels that he is privileged and at home. He made his way to her solitude, and with that sort of quiet and unapologetic air, which seemed to consider the right as a thing of course. With all the independence of Ione's character, his art had enabled him to obtain a secret and powerful control over her mind. She could not shake it off; sometimes she desired to do so; but she never actively struggled against it. She was fascinated by his serpent eye. He arrested, he commanded her, by the magic of a mind long accustomed to awe and to subdue. Utterly unaware of his real character or his hidden love, she felt for him the reverence which genius feels for wisdom, and virtue for sanctity. She regarded him as one of those mighty sages of old, who attained to the mysteries of knowledge by an exemption from the passions of their kind. She scarcely considered him as a being, like herself, of the earth, but as an oracle at once dark and sacred. She did not love him, but she feared. His presence was unwelcome to her; it dimmed her spirit even in its brightest mood; he seemed, with his chilling and lofty aspect, like some eminence which casts a shadow over the sun. But she never thought of forbidding his visits. She was passive under the influence which created in her breast, not the repugnance, but something of the stillness, of terror.

Arbaces himself now resolved to exert all his arts to possess himself of that treasure he so burningly coveted. He was cheered and elated by his conquests over her brother. From the hour in which Apæcides fell beneath the voluptuous sorcery of that fête which we have described, he felt his empire over the young priest triumphant and ensured. He knew that there is no victim so thoroughly subdued as a young and fervent man, for the first time delivered to the thraldom of the senses.

When Apæcides recovered, with the morning light, from the profound sleep which succeeded to the delirium of wonder and of pleasure, he was, it is true, ashamed—terrified—appalled. His vows of austerity and celibacy echoed in his ear; his thirst after holiness—had it been quenched at so unhallowed a stream? But Arbaces knew well the means by which to confirm his conquest. From the arts of pleasure he led the young priest at once to those of his mysterious wisdom. He bared to his amazed eyes the initiatory secrets of the sombre philosophy of the Nile—those secrets plucked from the stars, and the wild chemistry, which, in those days, when Reason herself was but the creature of Imagination, might well pass for the lore of a diviner magic. He seemed to the young eyes of the priest as a being above mortality, and endowed with supernatural gifts. That yearning and intense desire for the knowledge which is not of earth—which had burned from his boyhood in the heart of the priest—was dazzled, until it confused and mastered his clearer sense. He gave himself to the art which thus addressed at once the two strongest of human passions, that of pleasure and that of knowledge. He was loth to believe that one so wise could err, that one so lofty could stoop to deceive. Entangled in the dark web of metaphysical moralities, he caught at the excuse by which the Egyptian converted vice into a virtue. His pride was insensibly flattered that Arbaces had deigned to rank him with himself, to set him apart from the laws which bound the vulgar, to make him an august participator, both in the mystic studies and the magic fascinations of the Egyptian's solitude. The pure and stern lessons of that creed to which Olinthus had sought to make him convert, were swept away from his memory by the deluge of new passions. And the Egyptian, who was versed in the articles of that true faith, and who soon learned from his pupil the effect which had been produced upon him by its believers, sought, not unskilfully, to undo that effect, by a tone of reasoning, half sarcastic and half earnest.

"This faith," said he, "is but a borrowed

plagiarism from one of the many allegories invented by our priests of old. Observe," he added, pointing to a hieroglyphical scroll, —"observe, in these ancient figures, the origin of the Christian's Trinity. Here are also three Gods—the Deity, the Spirit, and the Son. Observe, that the epithet of the Son is 'Saviour,'—observe, that the sign by which his human qualities are denoted is the cross.* Note here, too, the mystic history of Osiris, how he put on death; how he lay in the grave; and how, thus fulfilling a solemn atonement, he rose again from the dead! In these stories we but design to paint an allegory from the operations of nature and the evolutions of the eternal heavens. But, the allegory unknown, the types themselves have furnished to credulous nations the materials of many creeds. They have travelled to the vast plains of India; they have mixed themselves up in the visionary speculations of the Greek: becoming more and more gross and embodied, as they emerge farther from the shadows of their antique origin, they have assumed a human and palpable form in this novel faith; and the believers of Galilee are but the unconscious repeaters of one of the superstitions of the Nile!"

This was the last argument which completely subdued the priest. It was necessary to him, as to all, to believe in something; and undivided and, at last, unreluctant, he surrendered himself to that belief which Arbaces inculcated, and which all that was human in passion—all that was flattering in vanity—all that was alluring in pleasure, served to invite to, and contributed to confirm.

This conquest thus easily made, the Egyptian could now give himself wholly up to the pursuit of a far dearer and mightier object; and he hailed, in his success with the brother, an omen of his triumph over the sister.

He had seen Ione on the day following the revel we have witnessed; and which was also the day after he had poisoned her mind against his rival. The next day, and the next, he saw her also: and each time he laid himself out with consummate art, partly to confirm her impression against Glaucus, and principally to prepare her for the impressions he desired her to receive. The proud Ione took care to conceal the anguish she endured; and the pride of woman has an hypocrisy which can deceive the most penetrating, and shame the most astute. But Arbaces was no less cautious not to recur to a subject which he felt it was most politic to treat as of the lightest importance. He knew that by dwelling much upon the fault of a rival, you only give him dignity in the eyes of your mistress: the wisest plan is, neither loudly to hate, nor bitterly to contemn; the wisest plan is to lower him by an indifference of tone, as if you could not dream that *he* could be loved. Your safety is in concealing the wound to your own pride, and imperceptibly alarming that of the umpire, whose voice is fate! Such, in all times, will be the policy of one who knows the science of the sex—it was now the Egyptian's.

He recurred no more, then, to the presumption of Glaucus; he mentioned his name, but not more often than that of Clodius or of Lepidus. He affected to class them together, as things of a low and ephemeral species; as things wanting nothing of the butterfly, save its innocence and its grace. Sometimes he slightly alluded to some invented debauch, in which he declared them companions; sometimes he adverted to them as the antipodes of those lofty and spiritual natures, to whose order that of Ione belonged. Blinded alike by the pride of Ione, and, perhaps, by his own, he dreamed not that she already loved; but he dreaded lest she might have formed for Glaucus the first fluttering prepossessions that *lead* to love. And, secretly, he ground his teeth in rage and jealousy, when he reflected on the youth, the fascinations, and the brilliancy of that formidable rival whom he pretended to undervalue.

It was on the fourth day from the date of the close of the previous book, that Arbaces and Ione sat together.

"You wear your veil at home," said the Egyptian; "that is not fair to those whom you honor with your friendship."

"But to Arbaces," answered Ione, who, indeed, had cast the veil over her features to conceal eyes red with weeping—"to Arbaces,

* The believer will draw from this vague coincidence a very different corollary from that of the Egyptian.

who looks only to the mind, what matters it that the face is concealed?"

"I do look only to the mind," replied the Egyptian: "show me then your face—for there I shall see it!"

"You grow gallant in the air of Pompeii," said Ione, with a forced tone of gaiety.

"Do you think, fair Ione, that it is only at Pompeii that I have learned to value you?" The Egyptian's voice trembled—he paused for a moment, and then resumed.

"There is a love, beautiful Greek, which is not the love only of the thoughtless and the young—there is a love which sees not with the eyes, which hears not with the ears; but in which soul is enamored of soul. The countryman of thy ancestors, the cave-nursed Plato, dreamed of such a love—his followers have sought to imitate it; but it is a love that is not for the herd to echo—it is a love that only high and noble natures can conceive—it hath nothing in common with the sympathies and ties of coarse affection;—wrinkles do not revolt it—homeliness of feature does not deter; it asks youth, it is true, but it asks it only in the freshness of the emotions; it asks beauty, it is true, but it is the beauty of the thought and of the spirit. Such is the love, O Ione, which is a worthy offering to thee from the cold and the austere. Austere and cold thou deemest me—such is the love that I venture to lay upon thy shrine—thou canst receive it without a blush."

"And its name is Friendship!" replied Ione: her answer was innocent, yet it sounded like the reproof of one conscious of the design of the speaker.

"Friendship!" said Arbaces, vehemently. "No; that is a word too often profaned to apply to a sentiment so sacred. Friendship! it is a tie that binds fools and profligates! Friendship! it is a bond that unites the frivolous hearts of a Glaucus and a Clodius! Friendship! no, *that* is an affection of earth, of vulgar habits and sordid sympathies; the feeling of which I speak is borrowed from the stars*—it partakes of that mystic and ineffable yearning, which we feel when we gaze on them—it burns, yet it purifies,—it is the lamp of naphtha in the alabaster vase, glowing with fragrant odors, but shining only through the purest vessels. No; it is not love, and it is not friendship, that Arbaces feels for Ione. Give it no name—earth has no name for it—it is not of earth—why debase it with earthly epithets and earthly associations?"

Never before had Arbaces ventured so far, yet he felt his ground step by step; he knew that he uttered a language which, if at this day of affected platonisms it would speak unequivocally to the ears of beauty, was at that time strange and unfamiliar, to which no precise idea could be attached, from which he could imperceptibly advance or recede, as occasion suited, as hope encouraged, or fear deterred. Ione trembled, though she knew not why; her veil hid her features, and masked an expression, which, if seen by the Egyptian, would have at once damped and enraged him; in fact, he never was more displeasing to her—the harmonious modulation of the most suasive voice that ever disguised unhallowed thought fell discordantly on her ear. Her whole soul was still filled with the image of Glaucus; and the accent of tenderness from another only revolted and dismayed; yet she did not conceive that any passion more ardent than that platonism which Arbaces expressed lurked beneath his words. She thought that he, in truth, spoke only of the affection and sympathy of the soul; but was it not precisely that affection and that sympathy which had made a part of those emotions she felt for Glaucus; and could any other footstep than his approach the haunted adytus of her heart?

Anxious at once to change the conversation, she replied, therefore, with a cold and indifferent voice, "Whomsoever Arbaces honors with the sentiments of esteem, it is natural that his elevated wisdom should color that sentiment with its own hues; it is natural that his friendship should be purer than that of others, whose pursuits and errors he does not deign to share. But tell me, Arbaces, hast thou seen my brother of late? He has not visited me for several days; and when I last saw him his manner disturbed and alarmed me much. I fear lest he was too precipitate in the severe choice that he has adopted, and that he repents an irrevocable step."

* Plato.

"Be cheered, Ione," replied the Egyptian. "It is true, that some little time since he was troubled and sad of spirit; those doubts beset him which were likely to haunt one of that fervent temperament, which ever ebbs and flows, and vibrates between excitement and exhaustion. But *he*, Ione, *he* came to me in his anxieties and his distress; he sought one who pitied and loved him; I have calmed his mind—I have removed his doubts—I have taken him from the threshold of Wisdom into its temple; and before the majesty of the goddess his soul is hushed and soothed. Fear not, he will repent no more; they who trust themselves to Arbaces never repent but for a moment."

"You rejoice me," answered Ione. "My dear brother! in his contentment I am happy."

The conversation then turned upon lighter subjects; the Egyptian exerted himself to please, he condescended even to entertain; the vast variety of his knowledge enabled him to adorn and light up every subject on which he touched; and Ione, forgetting the displeasing effect of his former words, was carried away, despite her sadness, by the magic of his intellect. Her manner became unrestrained and her language fluent; and Arbaces, who had waited his opportunity, now hastened to seize it.

"You have never seen," said he, "the interior of my home; it may amuse you to do so: it contains some rooms that may explain to you what you have often asked me to describe—the fashion of an Egyptian house; not, indeed, that you will perceive in the poor and minute proportions of Roman architecture the massive strength, the vast space, the gigantic magnificence, or even the domestic construction of the palaces of Thebes and Memphis; but something there is, here and there, that may serve to express to you some notion of that antique civilization which has humanized the world. Devote, then, to the austere friend of your youth, one of these bright summer evenings, and let me boast that my gloomy mansion has been honored with the presence of the admired Ione."

Unconscious of the pollutions of the mansion, of the danger that awaited her, Ione readily assented to the proposal. The next evening was fixed for the visit; and the Egyptian, with a serene countenance, and a heart beating with fierce and unholy joy, departed. Scarce had he gone, when another visitor claimed admission.——But now we return to Glaucus.

CHAPTER V.

THE POOR TORTOISE.—NEW CHANGES FOR NYDIA.

The morning sun shone over the small and odorous garden enclosed within the peristyle of the house of the Athenian. He lay, reclined, sad and listlessly, on the smooth grass which intersected the viridarium; and a slight canopy stretched above broke the fierce rays of the summer sun.

When that fairy mansion was first disinterred from the earth, they found in the garden the shell of a tortoise that had been its inmate.* That animal, so strange a link in the creation, to which Nature seems to have denied all the pleasures of life, save life's passive and dreamlike perception, had been the guest of the place for years before Glaucus purchased it; for years, indeed, which went beyond the memory of man, and to which tradition assigned an almost incredible date. The house had been built and rebuilt—its possessors had changed and fluctuated—generations had flourished and decayed—and still the tortoise dragged on its slow and unsympathizing existence. In the earthquake, which sixteen years before had overthrown many of the public buildings of the city, and scared away the amazed inhabitants, the house now inhabited by Glaucus had been terribly shattered. The possessors deserted it for many days; on their return they cleared away the ruins which encumbered the viridarium, and found still the tortoise, unharmed and unconscious of the surrounding destruction. It seemed to bear a charmed life in its languid blood and imperceptible motions; yet was it not so inactive as it seemed: it held a regular

* I do not know whether it be still preserved (I hope so), but the shell of a tortoise was found in the house appropriated, in this work, to Glaucus.

and monotonous course; inch by inch it traversed the little orbit of its domain, taking months to accomplish the whole gyration. It was a restless voyager, that tortoise!—patiently, and with pain, did it perform its self-appointed journeys, evincing no interest in the things around it—a philosopher concentrated in itself! There was something grand in its solitary selfishness!—the sun in which it basked—the waters poured daily over it—the air, which it insensibly inhaled, were its sole and unfailing luxuries. The mild changes of the season, in that lovely clime, affected it not. It covered itself with its shell—as the saint in his piety—as the sage in his wisdom—as the lover in his hope.

It was impervious to the shocks and mutations of time—it was an emblem of time itself: slow, regular, perpetual: unwitting of the passions that fret themselves around—of the wear and tear of mortality. The poor tortoise! nothing less than the bursting of volcanoes, the convulsions of the riven world, could have quenched its sluggish spark! The inexorable Death, that spared not pomp or beauty, passed unheedingly by a thing to which death could bring so insignificant a change.

For this animal, the mercurial and vivid Greek felt all the wonder and affection of contrast. He could spend hours in surveying its creeping progress, in moralizing over its mechanism. He despised it in joy—he envied it in sorrow.

Regarding it now as he lay along the sward, its dull mass moving while it seemed motionless, the Athenian murmured to himself:—

"The eagle dropped a stone from his talons, thinking to break thy shell: the stone crushed the head of a poet. This is the allegory of Fate! Dull thing! Thou hadst a father and a mother; perhaps, ages ago, thou thyself hadst a mate. Did thy parents love, or didst thou? Did thy slow blood circulate more gladly when thou didst creep to the side of thy wedded one? Wert thou capable of affection? Could it distress thee if she were away from thy side? Couldst thou feel when she was present? What would I not give to know the history of thy mailed breast—to gaze upon the mechanism of thy faint desires—to mark what hair-breadth difference separates thy sorrow from thy joy! Yet, methinks, thou wouldst know if Ione were present! Thou wouldst feel her coming like a happier air—like a gladder sun. I envy thee now, for thou knowest not that she is absent; and I—would I could be like thee—between the intervals of seeing her! What doubt, what presentiment, haunts me! why will she not admit me? Days have passed since I heard her voice. For the first time, life grows flat to me. I am as one who is left alone at a banquet, the lights dead, and the flowers faded. Ah! Ione, couldst thou dream how I adore thee!"

From these enamored reveries, Glaucus was interrupted by the entrance of Nydia. She came with her light, though cautious step, along the marble tablinum. She passed the portico, and paused at the flowers which bordered the garden. She had her water vase in her hand, and she sprinkled the thirsting plants, which seemed to brighten at her approach. She bent to inhale their odor. She touched them timidly and caressingly. She felt, along their stems, if any withered leaf, or creeping insect, marred their beauty. And as she hovered from flower to flower, with her earnest and youthful countenance and graceful motions, you could not have imagined a fitter handmaid for the goddess of the garden.

"Nydia, my child!" said Glaucus.

At the sound of his voice she paused at once—listening, blushing, breathless; with her lips parted, her face upturned to catch the direction of the sound, she laid down the vase—she hastened to him; and wonderful it was to see how unerringly she threaded her dark way through the flowers, and came by the shortest path to the side of her new lord.

"Nydia," said Glaucus, tenderly stroking back her long and beautiful hair, "it is now three days since thou has been under the protection of my household gods. Have they smiled on thee? Art thou happy?"

"Ah! so happy!" sighed the slave.

"And now," continued Glaucus, "that thou hast recovered somewhat from the hateful recollections of thy former state,—and now that they have fitted thee (touching her broidered tunic) with garments more

meet for thy delicate shape,—and now, sweet child, that thou hast accustomed thyself to a happiness, which may the gods grant thee ever! I am about to pray at thy hands a boon."

"Oh! what can I do for thee?" said Nydia, clasping her hands.

"Listen," said Glaucus, "and young as thou art, thou shalt be my confidant. Hast thou ever heard the name of Ione?"

The blind girl gasped for breath, and turning pale as one of the statues which shone upon them from the peristyle, she answered with an effort, and after a moment's pause,—

"Yes! I have heard that she is of Neapolis, and beautiful."

"Beautiful! her beauty is a thing to dazzle the day! Neapolis! nay, she is Greek by origin; Greece only could furnish forth such shapes. Nydia, I love her!"

"I thought so," replied Nydia, calmly.

"I love, and thou shalt tell her so. I am about to send thee to her. Happy Nydia, thou wilt be in her chamber—thou wilt drink the music of her voice—thou wilt bask in the sunny air of her presence!"

"What! what! wilt thou send me from thee?"

"Thou wilt go to Ione," answered Glaucus, in a tone that said, "What more canst thou desire?"

Nydia burst into tears.

Glaucus, raising himself, drew her towards him with the soothing caresses of a brother.

"My child, my Nydia, thou weepest in ignorance of the happiness I bestow on thee. She is gentle, and kind, and soft as the breeze of spring. She will be a sister to thy youth—she will appreciate thy winning talents—she will love thy simple graces as none other could, for they are like her own. Weepest thou still, fond fool! I will not force thee, sweet. Wilt thou not do for me this kindness?"

"Well, if I can serve thee, command. See, I weep no longer—I am calm."

"That is my own Nydia," continued Glaucus, kissing her hand. "Go, then, to her: if thou art disappointed in her kindness—if I have deceived thee, return when thou wilt. I do not *give* thee to another; I but lend. My home ever be thy refuge, sweet one. Ah! would it could shelter all the friendless and distressed! But if my heart whispers truly, I shall claim thee again soon, my child. My home and Ione's will become the same, and thou shalt dwell with both."

A shiver passed through the slight frame of the blind girl, but she wept no more—she was resigned.

"Go, then, my Nydia, to Ione's house—they shall show thee the way. Take her the fairest flowers thou canst pluck; the vase which contains them I will give thee: thou must excuse its unworthiness. Thou shalt take, too, with thee the lute that I gave thee yesterday, and from which thou knowest so well to awaken the charming spirit. Thou shalt give her also this letter, in which, after a hundred efforts, I have embodied something of my thoughts. Let thy ear catch every accent—every modulation of her voice, and tell me, when we meet again, if its music should flatter me or discourage. It is now, Nydia, some days since I have been admitted to Ione; there is something mysterious in this exclusion. I am distracted with doubts and fears; learn—for thou art quick, and thy care for me will sharpen tenfold thy acuteness—learn the cause of this unkindness; speak of me as often as thou canst; let my name come ever to thy lips; *insinuate* how I love rather than *proclaim* it; watch if she sighs whilst thou speakest, if she answer thee; or, if she reproves, in what accent she reproves. Be my friend, plead for me: and oh! how vastly wilt thou overpay the little I have done for thee! Thou comprehendest, Nydia; thou art yet a child—have I said more than thou canst understand?"

"No."

"And thou wilt serve me?"

"Yes."

"Come to me when thou hast gathered the flowers, and I will give thee the vase I spake of; seek me in the chamber of Leda. Pretty one, thou dost not grieve now?"

"Glaucus, I am a slave; what business have I with grief or joy?"

"Sayest thou so? No, Nydia, be free. I give thee freedom; enjoy it as thou wilt, and pardon me that I reckoned on thy desire to serve me."

"You are offended. Oh! I would not, for that which no freedom can give, offend

you, Glaucus. My guardian, my savior, my protector, forgive the poor blind girl! She does not grieve even in leaving thee, if she can contribute to thy happiness."

"May the gods bless this grateful heart!" said Glaucus, greatly moved; and, unconscious of the fires he excited, he repeatedly kissed her forehead.

"Thou forgivest me," said she, "and thou wilt talk no more of freedom; my happiness is to be thy slave: thou hast promised thou wilt not give me to another——"

"I have promised."

"And now, then, I will gather the flowers."

Silently, Nydia took from the hand of Glaucus the costly and jewelled vase, in which the flowers vied with each other in hue and fragrance; tearlessly she received his parting admonition. She paused for a moment when his voice ceased—she did not trust herself to reply—she sought his hand—she raised it to her lips, dropped her veil over her face, and passed at once from his presence. She paused again as she reached the threshold; she stretched her hands towards it, and murmured,—

"Three happy days—days of unspeakable delight have I known since I passed thee—blessed threshold! may peace dwell ever with thee when I am gone! And now, my heart tears itself from thee, and the only sound it utters bids me—die!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPY BEAUTY AND THE BLIND SLAVE.

A SLAVE entered the chamber of Ione. A messenger from Glaucus desired to be admitted.

Ione hesitated an instant.

"She is blind, that messenger," said the slave; "she will do her commission to none but thee."

Base is that heart which does not respect affliction! The moment she heard the messenger was blind, Ione felt the impossibility of returning a chilling reply. Glaucus had chosen a herald that was indeed sacred—a herald that could not be denied.

"What can he want with me? what message can he send?" and the heart of Ione beat quick. The curtain across the door was withdrawn; a soft and echoless step fell upon the marble; and Nydia, led by one of the attendants, entered with her precious gift.

She stood still a moment, as if listening for some sound that might direct her.

"Will the noble Ione," said she, in a soft and low voice, "deign to speak, that I may know whither to steer these benighted steps, and that I may lay my offerings at her feet?"

"Fair child," said Ione, touched and soothingly, "give not thyself the pain to cross these slippery floors, my attendant will bring to me what thou hast to present;" and she motioned to the handmaid to take the vase.

"I may give these flowers to none but thee," answered Nydia; and, guided by her ear, she walked slowly to the place where Ione sat, and kneeling when she came before her, proffered the vase.

Ione took it from her hand, and placed it on the table at her side. She then raised her gently, and would have seated her on the couch, but the girl modestly resisted.

"I have not yet discharged my office," said she; and she drew the letter of Glaucus from her vest. "This will, perhaps, explain why he who sent me chose so unworthy a messenger to Ione."

The Neapolitan took the letter with a hand, the trembling of which Nydia at once felt and sighed to feel. With folded arms, and downcast looks, she stood before the proud and stately form of Ione;—no less proud, perhaps, in her attitude of submission. Ione waved her hand, and the attendants withdrew; she gazed again upon the form of the young slave in surprise and beautiful compassion; then, retiring a little from her, she opened and read the following letter:—

"Glaucus to Ione sends more than he dares to utter. Is Ione ill? thy slaves tell me 'No,' and that assurance comforts me. Has Glaucus offended Ione?—ah! that question I may not ask from *them*. For five days I have been banished from thy presence. Has the sun shone?—I know it not. Has the sky smiled?—it has had no

smile for me. My sun and my sky are Ione. Do I offend thee? Am I too bold? Do I say that on the tablet which my tongue has hesitated to breathe? Alas! it is in thine absence that I feel most the spells by which thou hast subdued me. And absence, that deprives me of joy, brings me courage. Thou wilt not see me; thou hast banished also the common flatterers that flock around thee. Canst thou confound me with them? It is not possible! Thou knowest too well that I am not of them—that their clay is not mine. For even were I of the humblest mould, the fragrance of the rose has penetrated me, and the spirit of thy nature hath passed within me, to embalm, to sanctify, to inspire. Have they slandered me to thee, Ione? Thou wilt not believe them. Did the Delphic oracle itself tell me thou wert unworthy, I would not believe it: and am I less incredulous than thou? I think of the last time we met—of the song which I sang to thee—of the look that thou gavest me in return. Disguise it as thou wilt, Ione, there is something kindred between us, and our eyes acknowledged it, though our lips were silent. Deign to see me, to listen to me, and after that exclude me if thou wilt. I meant not so soon to say I loved. But those words rush to my heart—they will have way. Accept, then, my homage and my vows. We met first at the shrine of Pallas; shall we not meet before a softer and a more ancient altar?

"Beautiful! adored Ione! If my hot youth and my Athenian blood have misguided and allured me, they have but taught my wanderings to appreciate the rest—the haven they have attained. I hang up my dripping robes on the Sea-god's shrine. I have escaped shipwreck. I have found THEE. Ione, deign to see me; thou art gentle to strangers, wilt thou be less merciful to those of thine own land? I await thy reply. Accept the flowers which I send—their sweet breath has a language more eloquent than words. They take from the sun the odors they return—they are the emblem of the love that receives and repays tenfold—the emblem of the heart that drunk thy rays, and owes to thee the germ of the treasures that it proffers to thy smile. I send these by one whom thou wilt receive for her own sake, if not for mine. She, like us, is a stranger; her fathers' ashes lie under brighter skies: but, less happy than we, she is blind and a slave. Poor Nydia! I seek as much as possible to repair to her the cruelties of Nature and of Fate, in asking permission to place her with thee. She is gentle, quick, and docile. She is skilled in music and the song; and she is a very Chloris * to the flowers. She thinks, Ione, that thou wilt love her: if thou dost not, send her back to me.

"One word more,—let me be bold, Ione. Why thinkest thou so highly of yon dark Egyptian? he hath not about him the air of honest men. We Greeks learn mankind from our cradle; we are not the less profound, in that we affect no sombre mien; our lips smile, but our eyes are grave—they observe—they note—they study. Arbaces is not one to be credulously trusted: can it be that he hath wronged me to thee? I think it, for I left him with thee; thou sawest how my presence stung him; since then thou hast not admitted me. Believe nothing that he can say to my disfavor: if thou dost, tell me so at once; for this Ione owes to Glaucus. Farewell! this letter touches thy hand; these characters meet thine eyes—shall they be more blessed than he who is their author? Once more, farewell!"

It seemed to Ione, as she read this letter, as if a mist had fallen from her eyes. What had been the supposed offence of Glaucus?—that he had not really loved! And now, plainly, and in no dubious terms, he confessed that love. From that moment his power was fully restored. At every tender word in that letter, so full of romantic and trustful passion, her heart smote her. And had she doubted his faith, and had she believed another? and had she not, at least, allowed to him the culprit's right to know his crime, to plead in his defence?—the tears rolled down her cheeks—she kissed the letter—she placed it in her bosom; and, turning to Nydia, who stood in the same place and in the same posture:—

"Wilt thou sit, my child," said she, "while I write an answer to this letter?"

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* The Greek Flora.

"You will answer it, then!" said Nydia, coldly. "Well, the slave that accompanied me will take back your answer."

"For you," said Ione, "stay with me—trust me, your service shall be light."

Nydia bowed her head.

"What is your name, fair girl?"

"They call me Nydia."

"Your country?"

"The land of Olympus—Thessaly."

"Thou shalt be to me a friend," said Ione, caressingly, "as thou art already half a country-woman. Meanwhile, I beseech thee, stand not on these cold and glassy marbles. —There! now that thou art seated, I can leave thee for an instant."

"Ione to Glaucus greeting.—Come to me, Glaucus," wrote Ione,—"come to me to-morrow. I may have been unjust to thee; but I will tell thee, at least, the fault that has been imputed to thy charge. Fear not, henceforth, the Egyptian—fear none. Thou sayest thou hast expressed too much—alas! in these hasty words I have already done so. Farewell!"

As Ione reappeared with the letter, which she did not dare to read after she had written—(Ah! common rashness, common timidity of love!)—Nydia started from her seat.

"You have written to Glaucus?"

"I have."

"And will he thank the messenger who gives to him thy letter?"

Ione forgot that her companion was blind; she blushed from the brow to the neck, and remained silent.

"I mean this," added Nydia, in a calmer tone; "the lightest word of coldness from thee will sadden him—the lightest kindness will rejoice. If it be the first, let the slave take back thine answer; if it be the last, let me—I will return this evening."

"And why, Nydia," asked Ione, evasively, "wouldst thou be the bearer of my letter?"

"It is so, then!" said Nydia. "Ah! how could it be otherwise; who could be unkind to Glaucus?"

"My child," said Ione, a little more reservedly than before, "thou speakest warmly —Glaucus, then, is amiable in thine eyes?"

"Noble Ione! Glaucus has been that to me which neither fortune nor the gods have been—*a friend!*"

The sadness mingled with dignity with which Nydia uttered these simple words, affected the beautiful Ione; she bent down and kissed her. "Thou art grateful, and deservedly so; why should I blush to say that Glaucus is worthy of thy gratitude? Go, my Nydia—take to him thyself this letter—but return again. If I am from home when thou returnest—as this evening, perhaps, I shall be—thy chamber shall be prepared next my own. Nydia, I have no sister—wilt thou be one to me?"

The Thessalian kissed the hand of Ione, and then said, with some embarrassment,—

"One favor, fair Ione—may I dare to ask it?"

"Thou canst not ask what I will not grant," replied the Neapolitan.

"They tell me," said Nydia, "that thou art beautiful beyond the loveliness of earth. Alas! I cannot see that which gladdens the world! Wilt thou suffer me, then, to pass my hand over thy face?—that is my sole criterion of beauty, and I usually guess aright."

She did not wait for the answer of Ione, but, as she spoke, gently and slowly passed her hand over the bending and half-averted features of the Greek—features which but one image in the world can yet depicture and recall—that image is the mutilated, but all-wondrous, statue in her native city—her own Neapolis;—that Parian face, before which all the beauty of the Florentine Venus is poor and earthly—that aspect so full of harmony—of youth—of genius—of the soul—which modern critics have supposed the representation of Psyche.*

Her touch lingered over the braided hair and polished brow—over the downy and damask cheek—over the dimpled lip—the swan-like and whitest neck. "I know, now, that thou art beautiful," she said; "and I can picture thee to my darkness henceforth, and for ever!"

When Nydia left her, Ione sank into a

* The wonderful remains of the statue so called in the Museo Borbonico. The face, for sentiment and for feature, is the most beautiful of all which ancient sculpture has bequeathed to us.

deep but delicious reverie. Glaucus then loved her; he owned it—yes, he loved her. She drew forth again that dear confession; she paused over every word, she kissed every line; she did not ask why he had been maligned, she only felt assured that he had been so. She wondered how she had ever believed a syllable against him; she wondered how the Egyptian had been enabled to exercise a power against Glaucus; she felt a chill creep over her as she again turned to his warning against Arbaces, and her secret fear of that gloomy being darkened into awe. She was awakened from these thoughts by her maidens, who came to announce to her that the hour appointed to visit Arbaces was arrived; she started, she had forgotten the promise. Her first impression was to renounce it; her second, was to laugh at her own fears of her eldest surviving friend. She hastened to add the usual ornaments to her dress, and doubtful whether she should yet question the Egyptian more closely with respect to his accusation of Glaucus, or whether she should wait till, without citing the authority, she should insinuate to Glaucus the accusation itself, she took her way to the gloomy mansion of Arbaces.

CHAPTER VII.

IONE ENTRAPPED.—THE MOUSE TRIES TO GNAW THE NET.

"O DEAREST Nydia!" exclaimed Glaucus as he read the letter of Ione, "whitest-robed messenger that ever passed between earth and heaven—how, how shall I thank thee?"

"I am rewarded," said the poor Thessalian.

"To-morrow—to-morrow! how shall I while the hours till then?"

The enamored Greek would not let Nydia escape him, though she sought several times to leave the chamber; he made her recite to him over and over again every syllable of the brief conversation that had taken place between her and Ione; a thousand times, forgetting her misfortune, he questioned her of the looks, of the countenance of his beloved; and then quickly again excusing his fault, he bade her recommence the whole recital which he had thus interrupted. The hours thus painful to Nydia passed rapidly and delightfully to him, and the twilight had already darkened ere he once more dismissed her to Ione with a fresh letter and with new flowers. Scarcely had she gone, than Clodius and several of his gay companions broke in upon him; they rallied him on his seclusion during the whole day, and his absence from his customary haunts; they invited him to accompany them to the various resorts in that lively city, which night and day proffered diversity to pleasure. Then, as now, in the south (for no land, perhaps, losing more of greatness has retained more of custom), it was the delight of the Italians to assemble at the evening; and, under the porticos of temples or the shade of the groves that interspersed the streets, listening to music or the recitals of some inventive tale-teller, they hailed the rising moon with libations of wine and the melodies of song. Glaucus was too happy to be unsocial; he longed to cast off the exuberance of joy that oppressed him. He willingly accepted the proposal of his comrades, and laughingly they sallied out together down the populous and glittering streets.

In the meantime Nydia once more gained the house of Ione, who had long left it; she inquired indifferently whither Ione had gone.

The answer arrested and appalled her.

"To the house of Arbaces—of the Egyptian? Impossible!"

"It is true, my little one," said the slave, who had replied to her question. "She has known the Egyptian long."

"Long! ye gods, yet Glaucus loves her!" murmured Nydia to herself. "And has," asked she aloud,—"has she often visited him before?"

"Never till now," answered the slave. "If all the rumored scandal of Pompeii be true, it would be better, perhaps, if she had not ventured there at present. But she, poor mistress mine, hears nothing of that which reaches us; the talk of the vestibulum reaches not to the peristyle." *

"Never till now!" repeated Nydia. "Art thou sure?"

* Terence.

"Sure, pretty one: but what is that to thee or to us?"

Nydia hesitated a moment, and then, putting down the flowers with which she had been charged, she called to the slave who had accompanied her, and left the house without saying another word.

Not till she had got half way back to the house of Glaucus did she break silence, and even then she only murmured inly:—

"She does not dream—she cannot—of the dangers into which she has plunged. Fool that I am,—shall I save her?—yes, for I love Glaucus better than myself."

When she arrived at the house of the Athenian, she learnt that he had gone out with a party of his friends, and none knew whither. He probably would not be home before midnight.

The Thessalian groaned; she sank upon a seat in the hall, and covered her face with her hands as if to collect her thoughts. "There is no time to be lost," thought she, starting up. She turned to the slave who had accompanied her.

"Knowest thou," said she, "if Ione has any relative, any intimate friend at Pompeii?"

"Why, by Jupiter!" answered the slave, "art thou silly enough to ask the question? Every one in Pompeii knows that Ione has a brother who, young and rich, has been—under the rose I speak—so foolish as to become a priest of Isis."

"A priest of Isis! O Gods! his name?"

"Apæcides."

"I know it all," muttered Nydia: "brother and sister, then, are to be both victims! Apæcides! yes, that was the name I heard in—— Ha! he well, then, knows the peril that surrounds his sister. I will go to him."

She sprang up at that thought, and taking the staff which always guided her steps, she hastened to the neighboring shrine of Isis. Till she had been under the guardianship of the kindly Greek, that staff had sufficed to conduct the poor blind girl from corner to corner of Pompeii. Every street, every turning in the more frequented parts, was familiar to her; and as the inhabitants entertained a tender and half-superstitious veneration for those subject to her infirmity, the passengers had always given way to her timid steps. Poor girl, she little dreamed that she should, ere very many days were passed, find her blindness her protection, and a guide far safer than the keenest eyes!

But since she had been under the roof of Glaucus, he had ordered a slave to accompany her always; and the poor devil thus appointed, who was somewhat of the fattest, and who, after having twice performed the journey to Ione's house, now saw himself condemned to a third excursion (whither the gods only knew), hastened after her, deploring his fate, and solemnly assuring Castor and Pollux that he believed the blind girl had the talaria of Mercury as well as the infirmity of Cupid.

Nydia, however, required but little of his assistance to find her way to the popular temple of Isis: the space before it was now deserted, and she won without obstacle to the sacred rails.

"There is no one here," said the fat slave. "What dost thou want, or whom? Knowest thou not that the priests do not live in the temple?"

"Call out!" said she, impatiently; "night and day there is always one flamen, at least, watching in the shrines of Isis."

The slave called,—no one appeared.

"Seest thou no one?"

"No one."

"Thou mistakest; I hear a sigh, look again."

The slave, wondering and grumbling, cast round his heavy eyes, and before one of the altars, whose remains still crowd the narrow space, he beheld a form bending as in meditation.

"I see a figure," said he, "and by the white garments it is a priest."

"O flamen of Isis!" cried Nydia, "servant of the Most Ancient, hear me!"

"Who calls?" said a low and melancholy voice.

"One who has no common tidings to impart to a member of your body; I come to declare and not to ask oracles."

"With whom wouldst thou confer? This is no hour for thy conference; depart, disturb me not: the night is sacred to the gods, the day to men."

"Methinks I know thy voice! thou art he whom I seek; yet I have heard thee speak

but once before. Art thou not the priest Apæcides?"

"I am that man," replied the priest, emerging from the altar, and approaching the rail.

"Thou art! the gods be praised!" Waving her hand to the slave, she bade him withdraw to a distance; and he, who naturally imagined some superstition connected, perhaps, with the safety of Ione, could alone lead her to the temple, obeyed, and seated himself on the ground at a little distance. "Hush!" said she, speaking quick and low; "art thou indeed Apæcides?"

"If thou knowest me, canst thou not recall my features?"

"I am blind," answered Nydia; "my eyes are in my ear, and *that* recognizes thee: yet swear that thou art he."

"By the gods I swear it, by my right hand, and by the moon!"

"Hush! speak low—bend near—give me thy hand: knowest thou Arbaces? Hast thou laid flowers at the feet of the dead? Ah! thy hand is cold—hark yet!—hast thou taken the awful vow?"

"Who art thou, whence comest thou, pale maiden?" said Apæcides, fearfully: "I know thee not; thine is not the breast on which this head hath lain; I have never seen thee before."

"But thou hast heard my voice: no matter, those recollections it should shame us both to recall. Listen, thou hast a sister."

"Speak! speak! what of her?"

"Thou knowest the banquets of the dead, stranger,—it pleases thee, perhaps, to share them—would it please thee to have thy sister a partaker? Would it please thee that Arbaces was her host?"

"O gods, he dare not! Girl, if thou mockest me, tremble! I will tear thee limb from limb!"

"I speak the truth; and while I speak Ione is in the halls of Arbaces—for the first time his guest. Thou knowest if there be peril in that first time! Farewell! I have fulfilled my charge."

"Stay! stay!" cried the priest, passing his wan hand over his brow. "If this be true, what—what can be done to save her? They may not admit me. I know not all the mazes of that intricate mansion. O Nemesis! justly am I punished!"

"I will dismiss yon slave, be thou my guide and comrade; I will lead thee to the private door of the house; I will whisper to thee the word which admits. Take some weapon: it may be needful!"

"Wait an instant," said Apæcides, retiring into one of the cells that flank the temple, and reappearing in a few moments wrapped in a large cloak which was then much worn by all classes, and which concealed his sacred dress. "Now!" he said, grinding his teeth, "if Arbaces hath dared to—but he dare not! he dare not! Why should I suspect him? Is he so base a villain? I will not think it—yet, sophist! dark bewilderer that he is! O gods protect!—hush! *are* there gods? Yes, there is one goddess, at least, whose voice I can command; and that is—Vengeance!"

Muttering these disconnected thoughts, Apæcides, followed by his silent and sightless companion, hastened through the most solitary paths to the house of the Egyptian.

The slave, abruptly dismissed by Nydia, shrugged his shoulders, muttered an adjuration, and, nothing loath, rolled off to his cubiculum.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLITUDE AND SOLILOQUY OF THE EGYPTIAN.—HIS CHARACTER ANALYZED.

We must go back a few hours in the progress of our story. At the first gray dawn of the day, which Glaucus had already marked with white, the Egyptian was seated, sleepless and alone, on the summit of the lofty and pyramidal tower which flanked his house. A tall parapet around it served as a wall, and conspired, with the height of the edifice and the gloomy trees that girded the mansion, to defy the prying eyes of curiosity or observation. A table, on which lay a scroll, filled with mystic figures, was before him. On high, the stars waxed dim and faint, and the shades of night melted from the sterile mountain-tops; only above Vesuvius there rested a deep and massy cloud, which for several days past had gath-

ered darker and more solid over its summit. The struggle of night and day was more visible over the broad ocean, which stretched calm, like a gigantic lake, bounded by the circling shores that, covered with vines and foliage, and gleaming here and there with the white walls of sleeping cities, sloped to the scarce rippling waves.

It was the hour, above all others, most sacred to the daring science of the Egyptian —the science which would read our changeful destinies in the stars.

He had filled his scroll, he had noted the moment and the sign; and, leaning upon his hand, he had surrendered himself to the thoughts which his calculation excited.

"*Again* do the stars forewarn me! Some danger, then, assuredly awaits me!" said he, slowly; "some danger, violent and sudden in its nature. The stars wear for me the same mocking menace which, if our chronicles do not err, they once wore for Pyrrhus—for him, doomed to strive for all things, to enjoy none—all attacking, nothing gaining—battles without fruit, laurels without triumph, fame without success; at last made craven by his own superstitions, and slain like a dog by a tile from the hand of an old woman! Verily, the stars flatter when they give me a type in this fool of war,—when they promise to the ardor of my wisdom the same results as to the madness of his ambition;—perpetual exercise—no certain goal;—the Sisyphus task, the mountain and the stone!—the stone, a gloomy image!—it reminds me that I am threatened with somewhat of the same death as the Epirote. Let me look again. 'Beware,' say the shining prophets, 'how thou passest under ancient roofs, or besieged walls, or overhanging cliffs—a stone, hurled from above, is charged by the curses of destiny against thee!' And, at no distant date from this, comes the peril: but I cannot, of a certainty, read the day and hour. Well! if my glass runs low, the sands shall sparkle to the last. Yet, if I escape this peril—ay, if I escape—bright and clear as the moonlight track along the waters glows the rest of my existence. I see honors, happiness, success, shining upon every billow of the dark gulf beneath which I must sink at last. What, then, with such destinies *beyond* the peril, shall I succumb *to* the peril? My soul whispers hope, it sweeps exultingly beyond the boding hour, it revels in the future,—its own courage is its fittest omen. If I were to perish so suddenly and so soon, the shadow of death would darken over me, and I should feel the icy presentiment of my doom. My soul would express, in sadness and in gloom, its forecast of the dreary Orcus. But it smiles—it assures me of deliverance."

As he thus concluded his soliloquy, the Egyptian involuntarily rose. He paced rapidly the narrow space of that star-roofed floor, and, pausing at the parapet, looked again upon the gray and melancholy heavens. The chills of the faint dawn came refreshingly upon his brow, and gradually his mind resumed its natural and collected calm. He withdrew his gaze from the stars, as, one after one, they receded into the depths of heaven; and his eyes fell over the broad expanse below. Dim in the silenced port of the city rose the masts of the galleys: along that mart of luxury and of labor was stilled the mighty hum. No lights, save here and there from before the columns of a temple, or in the porticos of the voiceless forum, broke the wan and fluctuating light of the struggling morn. From the heart of the torpid city, so soon to vibrate with a thousand passions, there came no sound: the streams of life circulated not; they lay locked under the ice of sleep. From the huge space of the amphitheatre, with its stony seats rising one above the other—coiled and round as some slumbering monster—rose a thin and ghastly mist, which gathered darker, and more dark, over the scattered foliage that gloomed in its vicinity. The city seemed as, after the awful change of seventeen ages, it seems now to the traveller,—a City of the Dead.*

The ocean itself—that serene and tideless sea—lay scarce less hushed, save that from its deep bosom came, softened by the distance, a faint and regular murmur, like the breathing of its sleep; and curving far, as with outstretched arms, into the green and

* When Sir Walter Scott visited Pompeii with Sir William Gell, almost his only remark was the exclamation, "The City of the Dead—the City of the Dead?"

beautiful land, it seemed unconsciously to clasp to its breast the cities sloping to its margin—Stabiæ,* and Herculaneum, and Pompeii—those children and darlings of the deep. "Ye slumber," said the Egyptian, as he scowled over the cities, the boast and flower of Campania; "ye slumber!—would it were the eternal repose of death! As ye now—jewels in the crown of empire—so once were the cities of the Nile! Their greatness hath perished from them, they sleep amidst ruins, their palaces and their shrines are tombs, the serpent coils in the grass of their streets, the lizard basks in their solitary halls. By that mysterious law of Nature, which humbles one to exalt the other, ye have thriven upon their ruins; thou, haughty Rome, hast usurped the glories of Sesostris and Semiramis—thou art a robber, clothing thyself with their spoils! And these—slaves in thy triumph—that I (the last son of forgotten monarchs) survey below, reservoirs of thine all-pervading power and luxury, I curse as I behold! The time shall come when Egypt shall be avenged! when the barbarian's steed shall make his manger in the Golden House of Nero! and thou that hast sown the wind with conquest shalt reap the harvest in the whirlwind of desolation!"

As the Egyptian uttered a prediction which fate so fearfully fulfilled, a more solemn and boding image of ill omen never occurred to the dreams of painter or of poet. The morning light, which can pale so wanly even the young cheek of beauty, gave his majestic and stately features almost the colors of the grave, with the dark hair falling massively around them, and the dark robes flowing long and loose, and the arm outstretched from that lofty eminence, and the glittering eyes, fierce with a savage gladness,—half prophet and half fiend!

He turned his gaze from the city and the ocean: before him lay the vineyards and meadows of the rich Campania. The gate and walls—ancient, half Pelasgic—of the city, seemed not to bound its extent. Villas and villages stretched on every side up the ascent of Vesuvius, not nearly then so steep or so lofty as at present. For as Rome itself is built on an exhausted volcano, so in similar security the inhabitants of the South tenanted the green and vine-clad places around a volcano whose fires they believed at rest for ever. From the gate stretched the long street of tombs, various in size and architecture, by which, on that side, the city is yet approached. Above all, rose the cloud-capt summit of the Dread Mountain, with the shadows, now dark, now light, betraying the mossy caverns and ashy rocks, which testified the past conflagrations, and might have prophesied—but man is blind—that which was to come!

Difficult was it then and there to guess the causes why the tradition of the place wore so gloomy and stern a hue; why, in those smiling plains, for miles around—to Baiæ and Misenum—the poets had imagined the entrance and thresholds of their hell—their Acheron, and their fabled Styx: why, in those Phlegræ,* now laughing with the vine, they placed the battles of the gods, and supposed the daring Titans to have sought the victory of heaven—save, indeed, that yet, in yon seared and blasted summit, fancy might think to read the characters of the Olympian thunderbolt.

But it was neither the rugged height of the still volcano, nor the fertility of the sloping fields, nor the melancholy avenue of tombs, nor the glittering villas of a polished and luxurious people, that now arrested the eye of the Egyptian. On one part of the landscape, the mountain of Vesuvius descended to the plain in a narrow and uncultivated ridge, broken here and there by jagged crags and copses of wild foliage. At the base of this, lay a marshy and unwholesome pool; and the intent gaze of Arbaces caught the outline of some living form moving by the marshes, and stooping ever and anon as if to pluck its rank produce.

"Ho!" said he, aloud, "I have, then, another companion in these unworldly night-watches. The witch of Vesuvius is abroad. What! doth she, too, as the credulous imagine,—doth she, too, learn the lore of the great stars? Hath she been uttering foul magic to the moon, or culling (as her pauses betoken) foul herbs from the veno-

* Stabiæ was indeed no longer a city, but it was still a favorite site for the villas of the rich.

* Or, *Phlegræi campi;* viz., scorched or burned fields.

nous marsh? Well, I must see this fellow-laborer. Whoever strives to know learns that no human lore is despicable. Despicable only you—ye fat and bloated things—slaves of luxury—sluggards in thought—who, cultivating nothing but the barren sense, dream that its poor soil can produce alike the myrtle and the laurel. No, the wise only can enjoy!—to us only *true* luxury is given, when mind, brain, invention, experience, thought, learning, imagination, all contribute like rivers to swell the seas of SENSE!—Ione!"

As Arbaces uttered that last and charmed word, his thoughts sunk at once into a more deep and profound channel. His steps paused; he took not his eyes from the ground; once or twice he smiled joyously, and then, as he turned from his place of vigil, and sought his couch, he muttered, "If death frowns so near, I will say at least that I have lived—Ione shall be mine!"

The character of Arbaces was one of those intricate and varied webs, in which even the mind that sat within it was sometimes confused and perplexed. In him, the son of a fallen dynasty, the outcast of a sunken people, was that spirit of discontented pride, which ever rankles in one of a sterner mould, who feels himself inexorably shut from the sphere in which his fathers shone, and to which Nature as well as birth no less entitles himself. This sentiment hath no benevolence; it wars with society, it sees enemies in mankind. But with this sentiment did not go its common companion, poverty. Arbaces possessed wealth which equalled that of most of the Roman nobles; and this enabled him to gratify to the utmost the passions which had no outlet in business or ambition. Travelling from clime to clime, and beholding still Rome everywhere, he increased both his hatred of society and his passion for pleasure. He was in a vast prison, which, however, he could fill with the ministers of luxury. He could not escape from the prison, and his only object, therefore, was to give it the character of the palace. The Egyptians, from the earliest time, were devoted to the joys of sense; Arbaces inherited both their appetite for sensuality and the glow of imagination which struck light from its rottenness. But still, unsocial in his pleasures as in his graver pursuits, and brooking neither superior nor equal, he admitted few to his companionship, save the willing slaves of his profligacy. He was the solitary lord of a crowded harem; but, with all, he felt condemned to that satiety which is the constant curse of men whose intellect is above their pursuits, and that which once had been the impulse of passion froze down to the ordinance of custom. From the disappointments of sense he sought to raise himself by the cultivation of knowledge; but as it was not his object to serve mankind, so he despised that knowledge which is practical and useful. His dark imagination loved to exercise itself in those more visionary and obscure researches which are ever the most delightful to a wayward and solitary mind, and to which he himself was invited by the daring pride of his disposition and the mysterious traditions of his clime. Dismissing faith in the confused creeds of the heathen world, he reposed the greatest faith in the power of human wisdom. He did not know (perhaps no one in that age distinctly did) the limits which Nature imposes upon our discoveries. Seeing that the higher we mount in knowledge the more wonders we behold, he imagined that Nature not only worked miracles in her ordinary course, but that she might, by the cabala of some master soul, be diverted from that course itself. Thus he pursued science, across her appointed boundaries, into the land of perplexity and shadow. From the truths of astronomy he wandered into astrological fallacy; from the secrets of chemistry he passed into the spectral labyrinth of magic; and he who could be sceptical as to the power of the gods, was credulously superstitious as to the power of man.

The cultivation of magic, carried at that day to a singular height among the would-be wise, was especially Eastern in its origin; it was alien to the early philosophy of the Greeks, nor had it been received by them with favor until Ostanes, who accompanied the army of Xerxes, introduced, amongst the simple credulities of Hellas, the solemn superstitions of Zoroaster. Under the Roman emperors it had become, however, naturalized at Rome (a meet subject for Juvenal's fiery wit). Intimately connected with magic

was the worship of Isis, and the Egyptian religion was the means by which was extended the devotion to Egyptian sorcery. The theurgic, or benevolent magic — the goetic, or dark and evil necromancy—were alike in pre-eminent repute during the first century of the Christian era; and the marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius.* Kings, courtiers, and sages, all trembled before the professors of the dread science. And not the least remarkable of his tribe was the formidable and profound Arbaces. His fame and his discoveries were known to all the cultivators of magic; they even survived himself. But it was not by his real name that he was honored by the sorcerer and the sage: his real name, indeed, was unknown in Italy, for "Arbaces" was not a genuinely Egyptian but a Median appellation, which, in the admixture and unsettlement of the ancient races, had become common in the country of the Nile; and there were various reasons, not only of pride, but of policy (for in youth he had conspired against the majesty of Rome), which induced him to conceal his true name and rank. But neither by the name he had borrowed from the Mede, nor by that which in the colleges of Egypt would have attested his origin from kings, did the cultivators of magic acknowledge the potent master. He received from their homage a more mystic appellation, and was long remembered in Magna Græcia and the Eastern plains by the name of "Hermes, the Lord of the Flaming Belt." His subtle speculations and boasted attributes of wisdom, recorded in various volumes, were among those tokens "of the curious arts" which the Christian converts most joyfully, yet most fearfully, burned at Ephesus, depriving posterity of the proofs of the cunning of the fiend.

The conscience of Arbaces was solely of the intellect—it was awed by no moral laws. If man imposed these checks upon the herd, so he believed that man, by superior wisdom, could raise himself above them. "If (he reasoned) I have the genius to impose laws, have I not the right to command my own creations? Still more, have I not the right to control—to evade—to scorn—the fabrications of yet meaner intellects than my own?" Thus, if he were a villain, he justified his villany by what ought to have made him virtuous—namely, the elevation of his capacities.

Most men have more or less the passion for power; in Arbaces that passion corresponded exactly to his character. It was not the passion for an external and brute authority. He desired not the purple and the fasces, the insignia of vulgar command. His youthful ambition once foiled and defeated, scorn had supplied its place—his pride, his contempt for Rome—Rome, which had become the synonyme of the world (Rome, whose haughty name he regarded with the same disdain as that which Rome herself lavished upon the barbarian), did not permit him to aspire to sway over others, for that would render him at once the tool or creature of the emperor. He, the Son of the Great Race of Rameses—*he* execute the orders of, and receive his power from, another! —the mere notion filled him with rage. But in rejecting an ambition that coveted nominal distinctions, he but indulged the more in the ambition to rule the heart. Honoring mental power as the greatest of earthly gifts, he loved to feel that power palpably in himself, by extending it over all whom he encountered. Thus had he ever sought the young—thus had he ever fascinated and controlled them. He loved to find subjects in men's souls—to rule over an invisible and immaterial empire!—had he been less sensual and less wealthy, he might have sought to become the founder of a new religion. As it was, his energies were checked by his pleasures. Besides, however, the vague love of this moral sway (vanity so dear to sages!), he was influenced by a singular and dream-like devotion to all that belonged to the mystic Land his ancestors had swayed. Although he disbelieved in her deities, he believed in the allegories they represented (or rather he interpreted those allegories anew). He loved to keep alive the *worship* of Egypt, because he thus maintained the shadow and the recollection of her *power*. He loaded, therefore, the altars of Osiris and of Isis with regal donations, and was ever anxious to dignify their priesthood by new and wealthy converts. The vow taken—the

* See note (*a*) at the end.

priesthood embraced—he usually chose the comrades of his pleasures from those whom he had made his victims, partly because he thus secured to himself their secrecy—partly because he thus yet more confirmed to himself his peculiar power. Hence the motives of his conduct to Apæcides, strengthened as these were, in that instance, by his passion for Ione.

He had seldom lived long in one place; but as he grew older, he grew more wearied of the excitement of new scenes, and he had sojourned among the delightful cities of Campania for a period which surprised even himself. In fact, his pride somewhat crippled his choice of residence. His unsuccessful conspiracy excluded him from those burning climes which he deemed of right his own hereditary possession, and which now cowered, supine and sunken, under the wings of the Roman eagle. Rome herself was hateful to his indignant soul; nor did he love to find his riches rivalled by the minions of the court, and cast into comparative poverty by the mighty magnificence of the court itself. The Campanian cities proffered to him all that his nature craved—the luxuries of an unequalled climate—the imaginative refinements of a voluptuous civilization. He was removed from the sight of a superior wealth; he was without rivals to his riches; he was free from the spies of a jealous court. As long as he was rich, none pried into his conduct. He pursued the dark tenor of his way undisturbed and secure.

It is the curse of sensualists never to love till the pleasures of sense begin to pall; their ardent youth is frittered away in countless desires—their hearts are exhausted. So, ever chasing love, and taught by a restless imagination to exaggerate, perhaps, its charms, the Egyptian had spent all the glory of his years without attaining the object of his desires. The beauty of to-morrow succeeded the beauty of to-day, and the shadows bewildered him in his pursuit of the substance. When, two years before the present date, he beheld Ione, he saw, for the first time, one whom he imagined he could *love*. He stood, then, upon that bridge of life, from which man sees before him distinctly a wasted youth on the one side, and the darkness of approaching age upon the other: a time in which we are more than ever anxious, perhaps, to secure to ourselves, ere it be yet too late, whatever we have been taught to consider necessary to the enjoyment of a life of which the brighter half is gone.

With an earnestness and a patience which he had never before commanded for his pleasures, Arbaces had devoted himself to win the heart of Ione. It did not content him to love, he desired to be loved. In this hope he had watched the expanding youth of the beautiful Neapolitan; and, knowing the influence that the mind possesses over those who are taught to cultivate the mind, he had contributed willingly to form the genius and enlighten the intellect of Ione, in the hope that she would be thus able to appreciate what he felt would be his best claim to her affection; viz. a character which, however criminal and perverted, was rich in its original elements of strength and grandeur. When he felt that character to be acknowledged, he willingly allowed, nay, encouraged her, to mix among the idle votaries of pleasure, in the belief that her soul, fitted for higher commune, would miss the companionship of his own, and that, in comparison with others, she would learn to love herself. He had forgot, that as the sunflower to the sun, so youth turns to youth, until his jealousy of Glaucus suddenly apprised him of his error. From that moment, though, as we have seen, he knew not the extent of his danger, a fiercer and more tumultuous direction was given to a passion long controlled. Nothing kindles the fire of love like a sprinkling of the anxieties of jealousy; it takes then a wilder, a more resistless flame; it forgets its softness; it ceases to be tender; it assumes something of the intensity—of the ferocity—of hate.

Arbaces resolved to lose no further time upon cautious and perilous preparations; he resolved to place an irrevocable barrier between himself and his rivals: he resolved to possess himself of the person of Ione: not that in his present love, so long nursed and fed by hopes purer than those of passion alone, he would have been contented with that mere possession. He desired the heart, the soul, no less than the beauty, of Ione; but he imagined that once separated by a

daring crime from the rest of mankind—once bound to Ione by a tie that memory could not break, she would be driven to concentrate her thoughts in him—that his arts would complete his conquest, and that, according to the true moral of the Roman and the Sabine, the empire obtained by force would be cemented by gentler means. This resolution was yet more confirmed in him by his belief in the prophecies of the stars; they had long foretold to him this year, and even the present month, as the epoch of some dread disaster, menacing life itself. He was driven to a certain and limited date. He resolved to crowd, monarch-like, on his funeral pyre all that his soul held most dear. In his own words, if he were to die, he resolved to feel that he had lived, and that Ione should be his own!

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT BECOMES OF IONE IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES.—THE FIRST SIGNAL OF THE WRATH OF THE DREAD FOE.

WHEN Ione entered the spacious hall of the Egyptian, the same awe which had crept over her brother impressed itself also upon her: there seemed to her as to him something ominous and warning in the still and mournful faces of those dread Theban monsters, whose majestic and passionless features the marble so well portrayed:—

"Their look, with the reach of past ages, was wise,
And the soul of eternity thought in their eyes."

The tall Ethiopian slave grinned as he admitted her, and motioned to her to proceed. Half-way up the hall she was met by Arbaces himself, in festive robes, which glittered with jewels. Although it was broad day without, the mansion, according to the practice of the luxurious, was artificially darkened, and the lamps cast their still and odor-giving light over the rich floors and ivory roofs.

"Beautiful Ione," said Arbaces, as he bent to touch her hand, "it is you that have eclipsed the day—it is your eyes that light up the halls—it is your breath which fills them with perfumes."

"You must not talk to me thus," said Ione, smiling: "you forget that your lore has sufficiently instructed my mind to render these graceful flatteries to my person unwelcome. It was you who taught me to disdain adulation: will you unteach your pupil!"

There was something so frank and charming in the manner of Ione, as she thus spoke, that the Egyptian was more than ever enamored, and more than ever disposed to renew the offence he had committed; he, however, answered quickly and gaily, and hastened to renew the conversation.

He led her through the various chambers of a house, which seemed to contain to her eyes, inexperienced to other splendor than the minute elegance of Campanian cities, the treasures of the world.

In the walls were set pictures of inestimable art; the lights shone over statues of the noblest age of Greece. Cabinets of gems, each cabinet itself a gem, filled up the interstices of the columns; the most precious woods lined the thresholds and composed the doors; gold and jewels seemed lavished all around. Sometimes they were alone in these rooms—sometimes they passed through silent rows of slaves, who, kneeling as she passed, proffered to her offerings of bracelets, of chains, of gems, which the Egyptian vainly entreated her to receive.

"I have often heard," said she, wonderingly, "that you were rich; but I never dreamed of the amount of your wealth."

"Would I could coin it all," replied the Egyptian, "into one crown, which I might place upon that snowy brow!"

"Alas! the weight would crush me; I should be a second Tarpeia," answered Ione, laughingly.

"But thou dost not disdain riches, O Ione! they know not what life is capable of who are not wealthy. Gold is the great magician of earth—it realizes our dreams—it gives them the power of a god—there is a grandeur, a sublimity in its possession; it is the mightiest, yet the most obedient of our slaves."

The artful Arbaces sought to dazzle the young Neapolitan by his treasures and his eloquence; he sought to awaken in her the

desire to be mistress of what she surveyed: he hoped that she would confound the owner with the possessions, and that the charms of his wealth would be reflected on himself. Meanwhile, Ione was secretly somewhat uneasy at the gallantries which escaped from those lips, which, till lately, had seemed to disdain the common homage we pay to beauty: and with that delicate subtlety, which woman alone possesses, she sought to ward off shafts deliberately aimed, and to laugh or to talk away the meaning from his warming language. Nothing in the world is more pretty than that same species of defence; it is the charm of the African necromancer who professed with a feather to turn aside the winds.

The Egyptian was intoxicated and subdued by her grace even more than by her beauty; it was with difficulty that he suppressed his emotions; alas! the feather was only powerful against the summer breezes, it would be the sport of the storm.

Suddenly as they stood in one hall, which was surrounded by draperies of silver and, white, the Egyptian clapped his hands, and as if by enchantment, a banquet rose from the floor—a couch or throne, with a crimson canopy, ascended simultaneously at the feet of Ione,—and at the same instant from behind the curtains swelled the invisible and softest music.

Arbaces placed himself at the feet of Ione, and children, young and beautiful as Loves, ministered to the feast.

The feast was over, the music sank into a low and subdued strain, and Arbaces thus addressed his beautiful guest:—

"Hast thou never in this dark and uncertain world—hast thou never aspired, my pupil, to look beyond—hast thou never wished to put aside the veil of futurity, and to behold on the shores of Fate the shadowy images of things to be? For it is not the past alone that has its ghosts: each event *to come* has also its spectrum—its shade; when the hour arrives, life enters it, the shadow becomes corporeal, and walks the world. Thus, in the land beyond the grave, are ever two impalpable and spiritual hosts—the things to be, the things that have been! If by our wisdom we can penetrate that land, we see the one as the other, and learn, as *I* have learned, not alone the mysteries of the dead, but also the destiny of the living."

"As thou hast learned!—Can wisdom attain so far?"

"Wilt thou prove my knowledge, Ione, and behold the representation of thine own fate? It is a drama more striking than those of Æschylus: it is one I have prepared for thee, if thou wilt see the shadows perform their part."

The Neapolitan trembled; she thought of Glaucus, and sighed as well as trembled;—were their destinies to be united? Half incredulous, half believing, half awed, half alarmed by the words of her strange host, she remained for some moments silent, and then answered,—

"It may revolt—it may terrify: the knowledge of the future will, perhaps, only embitter the present!"

"Not so, Ione. I have myself looked upon thy future lot, and the ghosts of thy Future bask in the gardens of Elysium; amidst the asphodel and the rose they prepare the garlands of thy sweet destiny, and the Fates, so harsh to others, weave only for thee the web of happiness and love. Wilt thou then come and behold thy doom, so that thou mayest enjoy it beforehand?"

Again the heart of Ione murmured "*Glaucus;*" she uttered a half-audible assent; the Egyptian rose, and taking her by the hand, he led her across the banquet-room—the curtains withdrew, as by magic hands, and the music broke forth in a louder and gladder strain; they passed a row of columns, on either side of which fountains cast aloft their fragrant waters; they descended by broad and easy steps into a garden. The eve had commenced; the moon was already high in heaven, and those sweet flowers that sleep by day, and fill, with ineffable odors, the airs of night, were thickly scattered amidst alleys cut through the star-lit foliage;—or, gathered in baskets, lay like offerings at the feet of the frequent statues that gleamed along their path.

"Whither wouldst thou lead me, Arbaces?" said Ione, wonderingly.

"But yonder," said he, pointing to a small building which stood at the end of the vista. "It is a temple consecrated to the Fates—our rites require such holy ground."

They passed into a narrow hall, at the end of which hung a sable curtain. Arbaces lifted it; Ione entered, and found herself in total darkness.

"Be not alarmed," said the Egyptian, "the light will rise instantly." While he so spoke, a soft, and warm, and gradual light diffused itself around; as it spread over each object, Ione perceived that she was in an apartment of moderate size, hung everywhere with black; a couch with draperies of the same hue was beside her. In the centre of the room was a small altar, on which stood a tripod of bronze. At one side, upon a lofty column of granite, was a colossal head of the blackest marble, which she perceived, by the crown of wheat-ears that encircled the brow, represented the great Egyptian goddess. Arbaces stood before the altar; he had laid his garland on the shrine, and seemed occupied with pouring into the tripod the contents of a brazen vase; suddenly from that tripod leaped into life a blue, quick, darting, irregular flame; the Egyptian drew back to the side of Ione, and muttered some words in a language unfamiliar to her ear; the curtain at the back of the altar waved tremulously to and fro—it parted slowly, and in the aperture which was thus made, Ione beheld an indistinct and pale landscape, which gradually grew brighter and clearer as she gazed; at length she discovered plainly trees, and rivers, and meadows, and all the beautiful diversity of the richest earth. At length, before the landscape, a dim shadow glided; it rested opposite to Ione; slowly the same charm seemed to operate upon it as over the rest of the scene; it took form and shape, and lo!—in its feature and in its form Ione beheld herself!

Then the scene behind the spectre faded away, and was succeeded by the representation of a gorgeous palace; a throne was raised in the centre of its hall—the dim forms of slaves and guards were ranged around it, and a pale hand held over the throne the likeness of a diadem.

A new actor now appeared; he was clothed from head to foot in a dark robe—his face was concealed—he knelt at the feet of the shadowy Ione—he clasped her hand—he pointed to the throne, as if to invite her to ascend it.

The Neapolitan's heart beat violently. "Shall the shadow disclose itself?" whispered a voice beside her—the voice of Arbaces.

"Ah, yes!" answered Ione, softly.

Arbaces raised his hand—the spectre seemed to drop the mantle that concealed its form—and Ione shrieked—it was Arbaces himself that thus knelt before her.

"This is, indeed, thy fate!" whispered again the Egyptian's voice in her ear. "And thou art destined to be the bride of Arbaces."

Ione started—the black curtain closed over the phantasmagoria; and Arbaces himself—the real, the living Arbaces—was at her feet.

"Oh, Ione!" said he, passionately gazing upon her; "listen to one who has long struggled vainly with his love. I adore thee! The Fates do not lie—thou art destined to be mine—I have sought the world around, and found none like thee. From my youth upward, I have sighed for such as thou art. I have dreamed till I saw thee—I wake, and I behold thee. Turn not away from me, Ione; think not of me as thou hast thought; I am not that being—cold, insensate, and morose, which I have seemed to thee. Never woman had lover so devoted—so passionate as I will be to Ione. Do not struggle in my clasp: see—I release thy hand. Take it from me if thou wilt—well, be it so! But do not reject me, Ione—do not rashly reject—judge of thy power over him whom thou canst thus transform. I who never knelt to mortal being, kneel to thee. I who have commanded fate, receive from thee my own. Ione, tremble not; thou art my queen—my goddess;—be my bride! All the wishes thou canst form shall be fulfilled. The ends of the earth shall minister to thee—pomp, power, luxury, shall be thy slaves. Arbaces shall have no ambition, save the pride of obeying thee. Ione, turn upon me those eyes—shed upon me thy smile. Dark is my soul when thy face is hid from it;—shine over me, my sun—my heaven—my daylight!—Ione, Ione—do not reject my love!"

Alone, and in the power of this singular and fearful man, Ione was not yet terrified; the respect of his language, the softness of his voice, reassured her; and, in her own

purity, she felt protection. But she was confused—astonished; it was some moments before she could recover the power of reply.

"Rise, Arbaces!" said she at length, and she resigned to him once more her hand, which she as quickly withdrew again, when she felt upon it the burning pressure of his lips. "Rise! and if thou art serious, if thy language be in earnest——"

"*If!*" said he, tenderly.

"Well, then, listen to me; you have been my guardian, my friend, my monitor; for this new character I was not prepared;—think not," she added quickly, as she saw his dark eyes glitter with the fierceness of his passion—"think not, that I scorn—that I am not touched—that I am not honored by this homage; but, say—canst thou hear me calmly?"

"Ay, though thy words were lightning, and could blast me!"

"*I love another!*" said Ione, blushingly, but in a firm voice.

"By the gods—by hell!" shouted Arbaces, rising to his fullest height; "dare not tell me that—dare not mock me:—it is impossible!—Whom hast thou seen—whom known? Oh, Ione! it is thy woman's invention, thy woman's art that speaks—thou wouldst gain time: I have surprised—I have terrified thee. Do with me as thou wilt—say that thou lovest not me; but say not that thou lovest another!"

"Alas!" began Ione; and then, appalled before his sudden and unlooked-for violence, she burst into tears.

Arbaces came nearer to her—his breath glowed fiercely on her cheek; he wound his arms round her—she sprang from his embrace. In the struggle a tablet fell from her bosom on the ground: Arbaces perceived, and seized it—it was the letter that morning received from Glaucus. Ione sank upon the couch, half dead with terror.

Rapidly the eyes of Arbaces ran over the writing; the Neapolitan did not dare to gaze upon him; she did not see the deadly paleness that came over his countenance—she marked not his withering frown, nor the quivering of his lip, nor the convulsions that heaved his breast. He read it to the end, and then, as the letter fell from his hand, he said, in a voice of deceitful calmness,—

"Is the writer of this the man thou lovest?"

Ione sobbed, but answered not.

"Speak!" he rather shrieked than said.

"It is—it is!"

"And his name—it is written here—his name is Glaucus!"

Ione, clasping her hands, looked round as for succor or escape.

"Then hear me," said Arbaces, sinking his voice into a whisper; "thou shalt go to thy tomb rather than to his arms! What! thinkest thou Arbaces will brook a rival such as this puny Greek? What! thinkest thou that he has watched the fruit ripen, to yield it to another? Pretty fool—no! Thou art mine—all—only mine: and thus—thus I seize and claim thee!" As he spoke, he caught Ione in his arms; and, in that ferocious grasp, was all the energy—less of love than of revenge.

But to Ione despair gave supernatural strength; she again tore herself from him—she rushed to that part of the room by which she had entered—she half withdrew the curtain—he seized her—again she broke away from him—and fell, exhausted, and with a loud shriek, at the base of the column which supported the head of the Egyptian goddess. Arbaces paused for a moment, as if to regain his breath; and then once more darted upon his prey.

At that instant the curtain was rudely torn aside, the Egyptian felt a fierce and strong grasp upon his shoulder. He turned—he beheld before him the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale, worn, but menacing, countenance of Apæcides. "Ah!" he muttered, as he glared from one to the other, "what Fury hath sent ye hither?"

"Atè," answered Glaucus; and he closed at once with the Egyptian. Meanwhile, Apæcides raised his sister, now lifeless, from the ground; his strength, exhausted by a mind long overwrought, did not suffice to bear her away, light and delicate though her shape: he placed her, therefore, on the couch, and stood over her with a brandishing knife, watching the contest between Glaucus and the Egyptian, and ready to plunge his weapon in the bosom of Arbaces should he be victorious in the struggle. There is, perhaps, nothing on earth so terri-

ble as the naked and unarmed contest of animal strength, no weapon but those which Nature supplies to rage. Both the antagonists were now locked in each other's grasp —the hand of each seeking the throat of the other—the face drawn back—the fierce eyes flashing—the muscles strained—the veins swelled—the lips apart—the teeth set;—both were strong beyond the ordinary power of men, both animated by relentless wrath; they coiled, they wound, around each other; they rocked to and fro—they swayed from end to end of their confined arena:—they uttered cries of ire and revenge;—they were now before the altar—now at the base of the column where the struggle had commenced: they drew back for breath—Arbaces leaning against the column—Glaucus a few paces apart.

"O ancient goddess!" exclaimed Arbaces, clasping the column, and raising his eyes towards the sacred image it supported, "protect thy chosen,—proclaim thy vengence against this thing of an upstart creed, who with sacrilegious violence profanes thy resting-place and assails thy servant."

As he spoke, the still and vast features of the goddess seemed suddenly to glow with life; through the black marble, as through a transparent veil, flushed luminously a crimson and burning hue; around the head played and darted coruscations of livid lightning; the eyes became like balls of lurid fire, and seemed fixed in withering and intolerable wrath upon the countenance of the Greek. Awed and appalled by this sudden and mystic answer to the prayer of his foe, and not free from the hereditary superstitions of his race, the cheeks of Glaucus paled before that strange and ghastly animation of the marble,—his knees knocked together,—he stood seized with a divine panic, dismayed, aghast, half unmanned before his foe! Arbaces gave him not breathing time to recover his stupor: "Die, wretch!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder, as he sprang upon the Greek; "the Mighty Mother claims thee as a living sacrifice!" Taken thus by surprise in the first consternation of his superstitious fears, the Greek lost his footing—the marble floor was as smooth as glass—he slid—he fell. Arbaces planted his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides, taught by his sacred profession, as well as by his knowledge of Arbaces, to distrust all miraculous interpositions, had not shared the dismay of his companion; he rushed forward,—his knife gleamed in the air,—the watchful Egyptian caught his arm as it descended,—one wrench of his powerful hand tore the weapon from the weak grasp of the priest,—one sweeping blow stretched him to the earth—with a loud and exulting yell Arbaces brandished the knife on high. Glaucus gazed upon his impending fate with unwinking eyes, and in the stern and scornful resignation of a fallen gladiator, when, at that awful instant, the floor shook under them with a rapid and convulsive throe,—a mightier spirit than that of the Egyptian was abroad!—a giant and crushing power, before which sunk into sudden impotence his passion and his arts. It woke—it stirred—that Dread Demon of the Earthquake—laughing to scorn alike the magic of human guile and the malice of human wrath. As a Titan, on whom the mountains are piled, it roused itself from the sleep of years, —it moved on its tortured couch,—the caverns below groaned and trembled beneath the motion of its limbs. In the moment of his vengeance and his power, the self-prized demigod was humbled to his real clay. Far and wide along the soil went a hoarse and rumbling sound,—the curtains of the chamber shook as at the blast of a storm,—the altar rocked—the tripod reeled,—and, high over the place of contest, the column trembled and waved from side to side,—the sable head of the goddess tottered and fell from its pedestal;—and as the Egyptian stooped above his intended victim, right upon his bended form, right between the shoulder and the neck, struck the marble mass! the shock stretched him like the blow of death, at once, suddenly, without sound or motion, or semblance of life, upon the floor, apparently crushed by the very divinity he had impiously animated and invoked!

"The Earth has preserved her children," said Glaucus, staggering to his feet. "Blessed be the dread convulsion! Let us worship the providence of the gods!" He assisted Apæcides to rise, and then turned upward the face of Arbaces; it seemed locked as in death; blood gushed from the Egyptian's

lips over his glittering robes; he fell heavily from the arms of Glaucus, and the red stream trickled slowly along the marble. Again the earth shook beneath their feet; they were forced to cling to each other; the convulsion ceased as suddenly as it came; they tarried no longer; Glaucus bore Ione lightly in his arms, and they fled from the unhallowed spot. But scarce had they entered the garden than they were met on all sides by flying and disordered groups of women and slaves, whose festive and glittering garments contrasted in mockery the solemn terror of the hour; they did not appear to heed the strangers,—they were occupied only with their own fears. After the tranquillity of sixteen years, that burning and treacherous soil again menaced destruction; they uttered but one cry, —"THE EARTHQUAKE! THE EARTHQUAKE!" and passing unmolested from the midst of them, Apæcides and his companions, without entering the house, hastened down one of the alleys, passed a small open gate, and there, sitting on a little mound over which spread the gloom of the dark green aloes, the moonlight fell on the bended figure of the blind girl,—she was weeping bitterly.

BOOK THE THIRD.

. . . . . Ἀλλὰ, Σελάνα,
Φαῖνε καλόν· τὶν γὰρ ποταείσομαι ἄσυχα, δαιμον,
Τᾷ χθονιᾳ, θ' Ἑκάτᾳ, τὰν καὶ σκύλακες τρομέοντι,
Ἐρχομέναν νεκύων ἀνά τ' ἠρία, καὶ μέλαν αἷμα.
Χαῖρ', Ἑκάτα δασπλῆτι, καὶ ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν ὀπάδει,
Φάρμακα ταῦθ' ἑρδοισα χερείονα μήτε τι Κίρκας.
Μητε τι Μηδειας, μήτε ξανθᾶς Περιμήδας.

THEOCRITUS.

Now sacred Moon—the mysteries of my song
To thee and hell-born Hecatè belong.
Pale Hecatè, who stalks o'er many a tomb
And adds fresh horror to sepulchral gloom;
Whilst reeking gore distains the paths of death,
And bloodhounds fly the blasting of her breath.
Hail, Hecatè! and give my rising spell
Ev'n Perimeda's sorceries to excel:
Bid the strong witchery match ev'n Circe's skill,
And with Medea's venom'd fury fill.

POLWKELE'S *Translation.*

CHAPTER I.

THE FORUM OF THE POMPEIANS;—THE FIRST RUDE MACHINERY BY WHICH THE NEW ERA OF THE WORLD WAS WROUGHT.

IT was early noon, and the forum was crowded alike with the busy and the idle. As at Paris at this day, so at that time in the cities of Italy, men lived almost wholly out of doors: the public buildings, the forum, the porticos, the baths, the temples themselves, might be considered their real homes; it was no wonder that they decorated so gorgeously these favorite places of resort,—they felt for them a sort of domestic affection as well as a public pride. And animated was, indeed, the aspect of the forum of Pompeii at that time! Along its broad pavement, composed of large flags of marble, were assembled various groups, conversing in that energetic fashion which appropriates a gesture to every word, and which is still the characteristic of the people of the south. Here, in seven stalls on one side the colonnade, sat the money-changers, with their glittering heaps before them, and merchants and seamen in various costumes crowding

round their stalls. On one side, several men in long togas* were seen bustling rapidly up to a stately edifice, where the magistrates administered justice;—these were the lawyers, active, chattering, joking, and punning, as you may find them at this day in Westminster. In the centre of the space, pedestals supported various statues, of which the most remarkable was the stately form of Cicero. Around the court ran a regular and symmetrical colonnade of Doric architecture; and there several, whose business drew them early to the place, were taking the slight morning repast which made an Italian breakfast, talking vehemently on the earthquake of the preceding night as they dipped pieces of bread in their cups of diluted wine. In the open space, too, you might perceive various petty traders exercising the arts of their calling. Here one man was holding out ribands to a fair dame from the country; another man was vaunting to a stout farmer the excellence of his shoes; a third, a kind of stall-restaurateur, still so common in the Italian cities, was supplying many a hungry mouth with hot messes from his small and itinerant stove, while—contrast strongly typical of the mingled bustle and intellect of the time—close by, a schoolmaster was expounding to his puzzled pupils the elements of the Latin grammar.† A gallery above the portico, which was ascended by small wooden staircases, had also its throng; though, as here the immediate business of the place was mainly carried on, its groups wore a more quiet and serious air.

Every now and then the crowd below respectfully gave way as some senator swept along to the temple of Jupiter (which filled up one side of the forum, and was the senators' hall of meeting), nodding with ostentatious condescension to such of his friends or clients as he distinguished amongst the throng. Mingling amidst the gay dresses of the better orders you saw the hardy forms of the neighboring farmers, as they made their way to the public granaries. Hard by the temple you caught a view of the triumphal arch, and the long street beyond swarming with inhabitants; in one of the niches of the arch a fountain played, cheerily sparkling in the sunbeams; and above its cornice rose the bronzed and equestrian statue of Caligula; strongly contrasting the gay summer skies. Behind the stalls of the money-changers was that building now called the Pantheon; and a crowd of the poorer Pompeians passed through the small vestibule which admitted to the interior, with panniers under their arms, pressing on towards a platform, placed between two columns, where such provisions as the priests had rescued from sacrifice were exposed for sale.

At one of the public edifices appropriated to the business of the city, workmen were employed upon the columns, and you heard the noise of their labor every now and then rising above the hum of the multitude:—*the columns are unfinished to this day!*

All, then, united, nothing could exceed in variety the costumes, the ranks, the manners, the occupations of the crowd;—nothing could exceed the bustle, the gaiety, the animation, the flow and flush of life all around. You saw there all the myriad signs of a heated and feverish civilization,—where pleasure and commerce, idleness and labor, avarice and ambition, mingled in one gulf their motley, rushing, yet harmonious, streams.

Facing the steps of the temple of Jupiter, with folded arms, and a knit and contemptuous brow, stood a man of about fifty years of age. His dress was remarkably plain,—not so much from its material, as from the absence of all those ornaments which were worn by the Pompeians of every rank,—partly from the love of show, partly, also, because they were chiefly wrought into those shapes deemed most efficacious in resisting the assaults of magic and the influence of the evil eye.* His forehead was high and bald; the few locks that remained at the back of the head were concealed by a sort of cowl, which made a part of his cloak, to be raised or lowered at pleasure, and was

* For the lawyers, and the clients when attending on their patrons, retained the toga after it had fallen into disuse among the rest of the citizens.

† In the Museum at Naples is a picture little known, but representing one side of the forum at Pompeii as then existing, to which I am much indebted in the present description. It may afford a learned consolation to my younger readers to know that the ceremony of *hoisting* (more honored in the breach than the observance) is of high antiquity, and seems to have been performed with all legitimate and public vigor in the forum of Pompeii.

* See note (*a*) at the end.

now drawn half-way over the head, as a protection from the rays of the sun. The color of his garments was brown, no popular hue with the Pompeians; all the usual admixtures of scarlet or purple seemed carefully excluded. His belt, or girdle, contained a small receptacle for ink, which hooked on to the girdle, a stilus (or implement of writing), and tablets of no ordinary size. What was rather remarkable, the cincture held no purse, which was the almost indispensable appurtenance of the girdle, even when that purse had the misfortune to be empty!

It was not often that the gay and egotistical Pompeians busied themselves with observing the countenances and actions of their neighbors; but there was that in the lip and eye of this bystander so remarkably bitter and disdainful, as he surveyed the religious procession sweeping up the stairs of the temple, that it could not fail to arrest the notice of many.

"Who is yon cynic?" asked a merchant of his companion, a jeweller.

"It is Olinthus," replied the jeweller; "a reputed Nazarene."

The merchant shuddered. "A dread sect!" said he, in a whispered and fearful voice. "It is said, that when they meet at nights they always commence their ceremonies by the murder of a new-born babe; they profess a community of goods, too,—the wretches! A community of goods! What would become of merchants, or jewellers either, if such notions were in fashion?"

"That is very true," said the jeweller; "besides, they wear no jewels,—they mutter imprecations when they see a serpent, and at Pompeii all our ornaments are serpentine."

"Do but observe," said a third, who was a fabricant of bronze, "how yon Nazarene scowls at the piety of the sacrificial procession. He is murmuring curses on the temple, be sure. Do you know, Celcinus, that this fellow, passing by my shop the other day, and seeing me employed on a statue of Minerva, told me with a frown that, had it been marble, he would have broken it; but the bronze was too strong for him. 'Break a goddess!' said I. 'A goddess!' answered the atheist; 'it is a demon,—an evil spirit.' Then he passed on his way cursing. Are such things to be borne? What marvel that the earth heaved so fearfully last night, anxious to reject the atheist from her bosom?—An atheist do I say? worse still,—a scorner of the Fine Arts! Woe to us fabricants of bronze, if such fellows as this give the law to society!"

"These are the incendiaries that burnt Rome under Nero," groaned the jeweller.

While such were the friendly remarks provoked by the air and faith of the Nazarene, Olinthus himself became sensible of the effect he was producing; he turned his eyes round, and observed the intent faces of the accumulating throng, whispering as they gazed; and surveying them for a moment with an expression, first of defiance and afterwards of compassion, he gathered his cloak round him and passed on, muttering audibly, "Deluded idolaters!—did not last night's convulsion warn ye? Alas! how will ye meet the last day?"

The crowd that heard these boding words gave them different interpretations, according to their different shades of ignorance and of fear; all, however, concurred in imagining them to convey some awful imprecation. They regarded the Christian as the enemy of mankind; the epithets they lavished upon him, of which "Atheist" was the most favored and frequent, may serve, perhaps, to warn us, believers of that same creed now triumphant, how we indulge the persecution of opinion Olinthus then underwent, and how we apply to those whose notions differ from our own the terms at that day lavished on the fathers of our faith.

As Olinthus stalked through the crowd, and gained one of the more private places of egress from the forum, he perceived gazing upon him a pale and earnest countenance, which he was not slow to recognize.

Wrapped in a pallium that partially concealed his sacred robes, the young Apæcides surveyed the disciple of that new and mysterious creed, to which at one time he had been half a convert.

"Is *he*, too, an impostor? Does this man, so plain and simple in life, in garb, in mien—does he too, like Arbaces, make austerity the robe of the sensualist? Does the veil of Vesta hide the vices of the prostitute?"

Olinthus, accustomed to men of all classes,

and combining with the enthusiasm of his faith a profound experience of his kind, guessed, perhaps, by the index of the countenance, something of what passed within the breast of the priest. He met the survey of Apæcides with a steady eye, and a brow of serene and open candor.

"Peace be with thee!" said he, saluting Apæcides.

"Peace!" echoed the priest, in so hollow a tone that it went at once to the heart of the Nazarene.

"In that wish," continued Olinthus, "all good things are combined—without virtue thou canst not have peace. Like the rainbow, Peace rests upon the earth, but its arch is lost in heaven! Heaven bathes it in hues of light—it springs up amidst tears and clouds,—it is a reflection of the Eternal Sun,—it is an assurance of calm—it is the sign of a great covenant between Man and God. Such peace, O young man! is the smile of the soul; it is an emanation from the distant orb of immortal light. PEACE be with you!"

"Alas!" began Apæcides, when he caught the gaze of the curious loiterers, inquisitive to know what could possibly be the theme of conversation between a reputed Nazarene and a priest of Isis. He stopped short, and then added in a low tone—"We cannot converse here, I will follow thee to the banks of the river; there is a walk which at this time is usually deserted and solitary."

Olinthus bowed assent. He passed through the streets with a hasty step, but a quick and observant eye. Every now and then he exchanged a significant glance, a slight sign, with some passenger, whose garb usually betokened the wearer to belong to the humbler classes. For Christianity was in this the type of all other and less mighty revolutions—the grain of mustard-seed was in the hearts of the lowly. Amidst the huts of poverty and labor, the vast stream which afterwards poured its broad waters beside the cities and palaces of earth, took its neglected source.

CHAPTER II.

THE NOONDAY EXCURSION ON THE CAMPANIAN SEAS.

"BUT tell me, Glaucus," said Ione, as they glided down the rippling Sarnus in their boat of pleasure, "how camest thou with Apæcides to my rescue from that bad man?"

"Ask Nydia yonder," answered the Athenian, pointing to the blind girl, who sat at a little distance from them, leaning pensively over her lyre:—"she must have thy thanks, not we. It seems that she came to my house, and finding me from home, sought thy brother in his temple; he accompanied her to Arbaces; on their way they encountered me, with a company of friends, whom thy kind letter had given me a spirit cheerful enough to join. Nydia's quick ear detected my voice—a few words sufficed to make me the companion of Apæcides; I told not my associates why I left them—could I trust thy name to their light tongues and gossiping opinion?—Nydia led us to the garden gate, by which we afterwards bore thee—we entered, and were about to plunge into the mysteries of that evil house, when we heard thy cry in another direction. Thou knowest the rest."

Ione blushed deeply. She then raised her eyes to those of Glaucus, and he felt all the thanks she could not utter. "Come hither, my Nydia," said she, tenderly, to the Thessalian. "Did I not tell thee that thou shouldst be my sister and friend? Hast thou not already been more?—my guardian, my preserver!"

"It is nothing," answered Nydia coldly, and without stirring.

"Ah! I forgot," continued Ione,—"I should come to thee:" and she moved along the benches till she reached the place where Nydia sat, and flinging her arms caressingly round her, covered her cheeks with kisses.

Nydia was that morning paler than her wont, and her countenance grew even more wan and colorless as she submitted to the embrace of the beautiful Neapolitan. "But how camest thou, Nydia," whispered Ione, "to surmise so faithfully the danger I was exposed to? Didst thou know aught of the Egyptian?"

"Yes, I knew of his vices."

"And how?"

"Noble Ione, I have been a slave to the vicious—those whom I served were his minions."

"And thou hast entered his house, since thou knewest so well that private entrance?"

"I have played on my lyre to Arbaces," answered the Thessalian, with embarrassment.

"And thou hast escaped the contagion from which thou hast saved Ione?" returned the Neapolitan, in a voice too low for the ear of Glaucus.

"Noble Ione, I have neither beauty nor station; I am a child, and a slave, and blind. The despicable are ever safe."

It was with a pained, and proud, and indignant tone that Nydia made this humble reply; and Ione felt that she only wounded Nydia by pursuing the subject. She remained silent, and the bark now floated into the sea.

"Confess that I was right, Ione," said Glaucus, "in prevailing on thee not to waste this beautiful noon in thy chamber—confess that I was right."

"Thou wert right, Glaucus," said Nydia, abruptly.

"The dear child speaks for thee," returned the Athenian.

"But permit me to move opposite to thee, or our light boat will be overbalanced."

So saying, he took his seat exactly opposite to Ione, and leaning forward, he fancied that it was her breath, and not the winds of summer, that flung fragrance over the sea.

"Thou wert to tell me," said Glaucus, "why for so many days thy door was closed to me?"

"Oh, think of it no more!" answered Ione, quickly; "I gave my ear to what I now know was the malice of slander."

"And my slanderer was the Egyptian?"

Ione's silence assented to the question.

"His motives are sufficiently obvious."

"Talk not of him," said Ione, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out his very thought.

'Perhaps he may be already by the banks of the slow Styx," resumed Glaucus; "yet in that case we should probably have heard of his death. Thy brother, methinks, hath felt the dark influence of his gloomy soul. When we arrived last night at thy house, he left me abruptly. Will he ever vouchsafe to be my friend?"

"He is consumed with some secret care," answered Ione, tearfully. "Would that we could lure him from himself! Let us join in that tender office."

"He shall be my brother," returned the Greek.

"How calmly," said Ione, rousing herself from the gloom into which her thoughts of Apæcides had plunged her—"How calmly the clouds seem to repose in heaven; and yet you tell me, for I knew it not myself, that the earth shook beneath us last night."

"It did, and more violently, they say, than it has done since the great convulsion sixteen years ago: the land we live in yet nurses mysterious terror; and the reign of Pluto, which spreads beneath our burning fields, seems rent with unseen commotion. Didst thou not feel the earth quake, Nydia, where thou wert seated last night? and was it not the fear that it occasioned thee that made thee weep?"

"I felt the soil creep and heave beneath me, like some monstrous serpent," answered Nydia; "but as I saw nothing, I did not fear: I imagined the convulsion to be a spell of the Egyptian's. They say he has power over the elements."

"Thou art a Thessalian, my Nydia," replied Glaucus, "and hast a national right to believe in magic."

"Magic!—who doubts it?" answered Nydia, simply: "dost thou?"

"Until last night (when a necromantic prodigy did indeed appal me), methinks I was not credulous in any other magic save that of love!" said Glaucus, in a tremulous voice, and fixing his eyes on Ione.

"Ah!" said Nydia, with a sort of shiver, and she awoke mechanically a few pleasing notes from her lyre; the sound suited well the tranquillity of the waters, and the sunny stillness of the noon.

"Play to us, dear Nydia," said Glaucus,—"play, and give us one of thine old Thessalian songs; whether it be of magic or not, as thou wilt—let it, at least, be of love!"

"Of love!" repeated Nydia, raising her large, wandering eyes, that ever thrilled those

who saw them with a mingled fear and pity; you could never familiarize yourself to their aspect: so strange did it seem that those dark wild orbs were ignorant of the day, and either so fixed was their deep mysterious gaze, or so restless and perturbed their glance, that you felt, when you encountered them, that same vague, and chilling, and half-preternatural impression, which comes over you in the presence of the insane,—of those who, having a life outwardly like your own, have a life within life—dissimilar—unsearchable—unguessed!

"Will you that I should sing of love?" said she, fixing those eyes upon Glaucus.

"Yes," replied he, looking down.

She moved a little way from the arm of Ione, still cast round her, as if that soft embrace embarrassed: and placing her light and graceful instrument on her knee, after a short prelude she sang the following strain:—

NYDIA'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

"The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose,
And the Rose loved one;
For who recks the wind where it blows?
Or loves not the sun?

II.

None knew whence the humble Wind stole,
Poor sport of the skies—
None dreamt that the Wind had a soul,
In its mournful sighs!

III.

Oh! happy Beam—how canst thou prove
That bright love of thine?
In thy light is the proof of thy love,
Thou hast but—to shine!

IV.

How its love can the Wind reveal?
Unwelcome its sigh;
Mute—mute to its Rose let it steal—
Its proof is—to die!"

"Thou singest but sadly, sweet girl," said Glaucus; "thy youth only feels as yet the dark shadow of Love: far other inspiration doth he wake, when he himself bursts and brightens upon us."

"I sing as I was taught," replied Nydia, sighing.

"Thy master was love-crossed then—try thy hand at a gayer air. Nay, girl, give the instrument to me." As Nydia obeyed, her hand touched his, and, with that slight touch, her breast heaved—her cheek flushed. Ione and Glaucus, occupied with each other, perceived not those signs of strange and premature emotions, which preyed upon a heart that, nourished by imagination, dispensed with hope.

And now, broad, blue, bright before them, spread that halcyon sea, fair as at this moment, seventeen centuries from that date, I behold it rippling on the same divinest shores. Clime, that yet enervates with a soft and Circean spell—that moulds us insensibly, mysteriously, into harmony with thyself, banishing the thought of austerer labor, the voices of wild ambition, the contests and the roar of life; filling us with gentle and subduing dreams, making necessary to our nature that which is its least earthly portion, so that the very air inspires us with the yearning and thirst of love! Whoever visits thee, seems to leave earth and its harsh cares behind—to enter by the Ivory Gate into the Land of Dreams. The young and laughing Hours of the PRESENT—the Hours, those children of Saturn, which he hungers ever to devour, seem snatched from his grasp. The past—the future—are forgotten, we enjoy but the breathing time. Flower of the world's garden—Fountain of Delight—Italy of Italy—beautiful, benign Campania!—vain were, indeed, the Titans, if on this spot they yet struggled for another heaven! Here, if God meant this working-day life for a perpetual holiday, who would not sigh to dwell for ever—asking nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, while thy skies shine over him—while thy seas sparkled at his feet—while thine air brought him sweet messages from the violet and the orange—and while the heart, resigned to—beating with—but one emotion, could find the lips and the eyes, which flatter it (vanity of vanities!) that love can defy custom, and be eternal?

It was then in this clime—on those seas, that the Athenian gazed upon a face that might have suited the nymph, the spirit of the place; feeding his eyes on the changeful roses of that softest cheek, happy beyond the happiness of common life, loving, and knowing himself beloved.

In the tale of human passion, in past ages,

there is something of interest even in the remoteness of the time. We love to feel within us the bond which unites the most distant eras—men, nations, customs, perish; THE AFFECTIONS ARE IMMORTAL!—they are the sympathies which unite the ceaseless generations. The past lives again, when we look upon its emotions—it lives in our own! That which was, ever is! The magician's gift, that revives the dead—that animates the dust of forgotten graves, is not in the author's skill—it is in the heart of the reader!

Still vainly seeking the eyes of Ione, as, half downcast, half averted, they shunned his own, the Athenian, in a low and soft voice, thus expressed the feelings inspired by happier thoughts than those which had colored the song of Nydia.

THE SONG OF GLAUCUS.

I.

"As the bark floateth on o'er the summer-lit sea,
Floats my heart o'er the deeps of its passion for thee;
All lost in the space, without terror it glides,
For, bright with thy soul is the face of the tides.
Now heaving, now hush'd, is that passionate ocean,
As it catches thy smile or thy sighs;
And the twin-stars* that shine on the wanderer's devotion,
Its guide and its god—are thine eyes!

II.

The bark may go down, should the cloud sweep above,
For its being is bound to the light of thy love.
As thy faith and thy smile are its life and its joy,
So thy frown or thy change are the storms that destroy.
Ah! sweeter to sink while the sky is serene,
If time hath a change for thy heart!
If to live be to weep over what thou hast been,
Let me die while I know what thou art!"

As the last words of the song trembled over the sea, Ione raised her looks,—they met those of her lover. Happy Nydia!—happy in thy affliction, that thou couldst not see that fascinated and charmed gaze, that said so much—that made the eye the voice of the soul—that promised the impossibility of change!

But, though the Thessalian could not detect that gaze, she divined its meaning by their silence—by their sighs. She pressed her hands tightly across her breast, as if to keep down its bitter and jealous thoughts; and then she hastened to speak—for that silence was intolerable to her.

"After all, O Glaucus!" said she, "there is nothing very mirthful in your strain!"

"Yet I meant it to be so, when I took up thy lyre, pretty one. Perhaps happiness will not permit us to be mirthful."

"How strange is it," said Ione, changing a conversation which oppressed her while it charmed,—"that for the last several days yonder cloud has hung motionless over Vesuvius! Yet not indeed motionless, for sometimes it changes its form; and now methinks it looks like some vast giant, with an arm outstretched over the city. Dost thou see the likeness—or is it only to my fancy?"

"Fair Ione! I see it also. It is astonishingly distinct. The giant seems seated on the brow of the mountain, the different shades of the cloud appear to form a white robe that sweeps over its vast breast and limbs; it seems to gaze with a steady face upon the city below, to point with one hand, as thou sayest, over its glittering streets, and to raise the other (dost thou note it?) towards the higher heaven. It is like the ghost of some huge Titan brooding over the beautiful world he lost; sorrowful for the past—yet with something of menace for the future."

"Could that mountain have any connection with the last night's earthquake? They say that, ages ago, almost in the earliest era of tradition, it gave forth fires as Ætna still. Perhaps the flames yet lurk and dart beneath."

"It is possible," said Glaucus, musingly.

"Thou sayest thou art slow to believe in magic?" said Nydia, suddenly. "I have heard that a potent witch dwells amongst the scorched caverns of the mountain, and yon cloud may be the dim shadow of the demon she confers with."

"Thou art full of the romance of thy native Thessaly," said Glaucus; "and a strange mixture of sense and all conflicting superstitions."

"We are ever superstitious in the dark," replied Nydia. "Tell me," she added, after a slight pause, "tell me, O Glaucus! do all

* In allusion to the Dioscuri, or twin-stars, the guardian deity of the seamen.

that are beautiful resemble each other? They say you are beautiful, and Ione also. Are your faces then the same? I fancy not, yet it ought to be so!"

"Fancy no such grievous wrong to Ione," answered Glaucus, laughing. "But we do not, alas! resemble each other, as the homely and the beautiful sometimes do. Ione's hair is dark, mine light; Ione's eyes are—what color, Ione? I cannot see, turn them to me. Oh, are they black? no, they are too soft. Are they blue? no, they are too deep; they change with every ray of the sun—I know not their color: but mine, sweet Nydia, are gray, and bright only when Ione shines on them! Ione's cheek is——"

"I do not understand one word of thy description," interrupted Nydia, peevishly. "I comprehend only that you do not resemble each other, and I am glad of it."

"Why, Nydia?" said Ione.

Nydia colored slightly. "Because," she replied, coldly, "I have always imagined you under different forms, and one likes to know one is right."

"And what hast thou imagined Glaucus to resemble," asked Ione, softly.

"Music!" replied Nydia, looking down.

"Thou art right," thought Ione.

"And what likeness hast thou ascribed to Ione?"

"I cannot tell yet," answered the blind girl; "I have not yet known her long enough to find a shape and sign for my guesses."

"I will tell thee, then," said Glaucus, passionately: "she is like the sun that warms—like the wave that refreshes."

"The sun sometimes scorches, and the wave sometimes drowns," answered Nydia.

"Take then these roses," said Glaucus; "let their fragrance suggest to thee Ione."

"Alas! the roses will fade!" said the Neapolitan, archly.

Thus conversing, they wore away the hours; the lovers conscious only of the brightness and smiles of love; the blind girl feeling only its darkness—its tortures; —the fierceness of jealousy and its woe!

And now, as they drifted on, Glaucus once more resumed the lyre, and woke its strings with a careless hand to a strain, so wildly and gladly beautiful, that even Nydia was aroused from her reverie, and uttered a cry of admiration.

"Thou seest, my child," cried Glaucus, "that I can yet redeem the character of love's music, and that I was wrong in saying happiness could not be gay. Listen, Nydia! listen, dear Ione! and hear

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.*

I.

"Like a Star in the seas above,
Like a Dream to the waves of sleep—
Up—up—THE INCARNATE LOVE—
She rose from the charmèd deep!
And over the Cyprian Isle
The skies shed their silent smile;
And the Forest's green heart was rife
With the stir of the gushing life—
The life that had leap'd to birth,
In the veins of the happy earth!
Hail! oh, hail!
The dimmest sea-cave below thee,
The farthest sky-arch above,
In their innermost stillness know thee:
And heave with the Birth of Love!
Gale! soft Gale!
Thou comest on thy silver winglets,
From thy home in the tender west;†
Now fanning her golden ringlets,
Now hush'd on her heaving breast.
And afar on the murmuring sand,
The Seasons wait hand in hand
To welcome thee, Birth Divine,
To the earth which is henceforth thine.

II.

Behold! how she kneels in the shell,
Bright pearl in its floating cell!
Behold! how the shell's rose-hues
The cheek and the breast of snow,
And the delicate limbs suffuse
Like a blush, with a bashful glow,
Sailing on, slowly sailing
O'er the wild water;
All hail! as the fond Light is hailing
Her daughter,
All hail!
We are thine, all thine evermore:
Not a leaf on the laughing shore,
Not a wave on the heaving sea,
Nor a single sigh
In the boundless sky,
But is vow'd evermore to thee!

III.

And thou, my beloved one—thou,
As I gaze on thy soft eyes now,

* Suggested by a picture of Venus rising from the sea, taken from Pompeii, and now in the Museum at Naples.

† According to the ancient mythologists, Venus rose from the sea near Cyprus, to which island she was wafted by the Zephyrs. The Seasons waited to welcome her on the sea-shore.

Methinks from their depths I view
The Holy Birth born anew;
Thy lids are the gentle cell
Where the young Love blushing lies;
See! she breaks from the mystic shell,
She comes from thy tender eyes!
Hail! all hail!
She comes, as she came from the sea,
To my soul as it looks on thee;
She comes, she comes!
She comes, as she came from the sea,
To my soul as it looks on thee!
Hail! all hail!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CONGREGATION.

Followed by Apæcides, the Nazarene gained the side of the Sarnus;—that river, which now has shrunk into a petty stream, then rushed gaily into the sea, covered with countless vessels, and reflecting on its waves the gardens, the vines, the palaces, and the temples of Pompeii. From its more noisy and frequented banks, Olinthus directed his steps to a path which ran amidst a shady vista of trees, at the distance of a few paces from the river. This walk was in the evening a favorite resort of the Pompeians, but during the heat and business of the day was seldom visited, save by some groups of playful children, some meditative poet, or some disputative philosophers. At the side farthest from the river, frequent copses of box interspersed the more delicate and evanescent foliage, and these were cut into a thousand quaint shapes, sometimes into the forms of fauns and satyrs, sometimes into the mimicry of Egyptian pyramids, sometimes into the letters that composed the name of a popular or eminent citizen. Thus the false taste is equally ancient as the pure; and the retired traders of Hackney and Paddington, a century ago, were little aware, perhaps, that in their tortured yews and sculptured box, they found their models in the most polished period of Roman antiquity, in the gardens of Pompeii, and the villas of the fastidious Pliny.

This walk now, as the noon-day sun shone perpendicularly through the checkered leaves, was entirely deserted; at least no other forms than those of Olinthus and the priest infringed upon the solitude. They sat themselves on one of the benches, placed at intervals between the trees, and facing the faint breeze that came languidly from the river, whose waves danced and sparkled before them;—a singular and contrasted pair;—the believer in the latest—the priest of the most ancient—worship of the world!

"Since thou leftst me so abruptly," said Olinthus, "hast thou been happy? has thy heart found contentment under these priestly robes? hast thou, still yearning for the voice of God, heard it whisper comfort to thee from the oracles of Isis? That sigh, that averted countenance, give me the answer my soul predicted."

"Alas!" answered Apæcides, sadly, "thou seest before thee a wretched and distracted man! From my childhood upward I have idolized the dreams of virtue! I have envied the holiness of men who, in caves and lonely temples, have been admitted to the companionship of beings above the world; my days have been consumed with feverish and vague desires; my nights with mocking but solemn visions. Seduced by the mystic prophecies of an impostor, I have indued these robes;—my nature—(I confess it to thee frankly)—my nature has revolted at what I have seen and been doomed to share in! Searching after truth, I have become but the minister of falsehoods. On the evening in which we last met, I was buoyed by hopes created by that same impostor, whom I ought already to have better known. I have—no matter—no matter! suffice it, I have added perjury and sin to rashness and to sorrow. The veil is now rent for ever from my eyes; I behold a villain where I obeyed a demigod; the earth darkens in my sight; I am in the deepest abyss of gloom; I know not if there be gods above; if we are the things of chance; if beyond the bounded and melancholy present there is annihilation or an hereafter—tell me, then, thy faith; solve me these doubts, if thou hast indeed the power!"

"I do not marvel," answered the Nazarene, "that thou hast thus erred, or that thou art thus sceptic. Eighty years ago, there was no assurance to man of God, or of a certain and definite future beyond the

grave. New laws are declared to him who has ears—a heaven, a true Olympus, is revealed to him who has eyes—heed them, and listen."

And with all the earnestness of a man believing ardently himself, and zealous to convert, the Nazarene poured forth to Apæcides the assurances of Scriptural promise. He spoke first of the sufferings and miracles of Christ—he wept as he spoke: he turned next to the glories of the Saviour's ascension—to the clear predictions of Revelation. He described that pure and unsensual Heaven destined to the virtuous—those fires and torments that were the doom of guilt.

The doubts which spring up to the mind of later reasoners, in the immensity of the sacrifice of God to man, were not such as would occur to an early heathen. He had been accustomed to believe that the gods had lived upon earth, and taken upon themselves the forms of men; had shared in human passions, in human labors, and in human misfortunes. What was the travail of his own Alcmæna's son, whose altars now smoked with the incense of countless cities, but a toil for the human race? Had not the great Dorian Apollo expiated a mystic sin by descending to the grave? Those who were the deities of heaven had been the lawgivers or benefactors on earth, and gratitude had led to worship. It seemed, therefore, to the heathen, a doctrine neither new nor strange, that Christ had been sent from heaven, that an immortal had indued mortality, and tasted the bitterness of death. And the end for which He thus toiled and thus suffered—how far more glorious did it seem to Apæcides than that for which the deities of old had visited the nether world, and passed through the gates of death! Was it not worthy of a God to descend to these dim valleys, in order to clear up the clouds gathered over the dark mount beyond—to satisfy the doubts of sages—to convert speculation into certainty—by example to point out the rules of life—by revelation to solve the enigma of the grave—and to prove that the soul did not yearn in vain when it dreamed of an immortality? In this last was the great argument of those lowly men destined to convert the earth. As nothing is more flattering to the pride and the hopes of man than the belief in a future state, so nothing could be more vague and confused than the notions of the heathen sages upon that mystic subject. Apæcides had already learned that the faith of the philosophers was not that of the herd; that if they secretly professed a creed in some diviner power, it was not the creed which they thought it wise to impart to the community. He had already learned, that even the priest ridiculed what he preached to the people—that the notions of the few and the many were never united. But, in this new faith, it seemed to him that philosopher, priest, and people, the expounders of the religion and its followers, were alike accordant: they did not speculate and debate upon immortality, they spoke of it as a thing certain and assured; the magnificence of the promise dazzled him—its consolations soothed. For the Christian faith made its early converts among sinners! many of its fathers and its martyrs were those who had felt the bitterness of vice, and who were therefore no longer tempted by its false aspect from the paths of an austere and uncompromising virtue. All the assurances of this healing faith invited to repentance—they were peculiarly adapted to the bruised and sore of spirit; the very remorse which Apæcides felt for his late excesses, made him incline to one who found holiness in that remorse, and who whispered of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

"Come," said the Nazarene, as he perceived the effect he had produced, "come to the humble hall in which we meet—a select and a chosen few; listen there to our prayers; note the sincerity of our repentant tears; mingle in our simple sacrifice—not of victims, nor of garlands, but offered by white-robed thoughts upon the altar of the heart. The flowers that we lay there are imperishable—they bloom over us when we are no more; nay, they accompany us beyond the grave, they spring up beneath our feet in heaven, they delight us with an eternal odor, for they are of the soul, they partake of its nature; these offerings are temptations overcome, and sins repented. Come, oh, come! lose not another moment; prepare already for the great, the awful journey, from darkness to light, from sorrow to

bliss, from corruption to immortality! This is the day of the Lord the Son, a day that we have set apart for our devotions. Though we meet usually at night, yet some amongst us are gathered together even now. What joy, what triumph, will be with us all, if we can bring one stray lamb into the sacred fold!"

There seemed to Apæcides, so naturally pure of heart, something ineffably generous and benign in that spirit of conversion which animated Olinthus—a spirit that found its own bliss in the happiness of others—that sought in its wide sociality to make companions for eternity. He was touched, softened, and subdued. He was not in that mood which can bear to be left alone; curiosity, too, mingled with his purer stimulants—he was anxious to see those rites of which so many dark and contradictory rumors were afloat. He paused a moment, looked over his garb, thought of Arbaces, shuddered with horror, lifted his eyes to the broad brow of the Nazarene, intent, anxious, watchful—but for *his* benefit, for his salvation! He drew his cloak round him, so as wholly to conceal his robes, and said, "Lead on, I follow thee."

Olinthus pressed his hand joyfully, and then descending to the river-side, hailed one of the boats that plyed there constantly; they entered it; an awning overhead, while it sheltered them from the sun, screened also their persons from observation: they rapidly skimmed the wave. From one of the boats that passed them floated a soft music, and its prow was decorated with flowers—it was gliding towards the sea.

"So," said Olinthus sadly, "unconscious and mirthful in their delusions, sail the votaries of luxury into the great ocean of storm and shipwreck; we pass them, silent and unnoticed, to gain the land."

Apæcides, lifting his eyes, caught through the aperture in the awning a glimpse of the face of one of the inmates of that gay bark—it was the face of Ione. The lovers were embarked on the excursion at which we have been made present. The priest sighed, and once more sunk back upon his seat. They reached the shore where, in the suburbs, an alley of small and mean houses stretched towards the bank; they dismissed the boat, landed, and Olinthus, preceding the priest, threaded the labyrinth of lanes, and arrived at last at the closed door of a habitation somewhat larger than its neighbors. He knocked thrice—the door was opened and closed again, as Apæcides followed his guide across the threshold.

They passed a deserted atrium, and gained an inner chamber of moderate size, which, when the door was closed, received its only light from a small window cut over the door itself. But, halting at the threshold of this chamber, and knocking at the door, Olinthus said, "Peace be with you!" A voice from within returned, "Peace with whom?" "The Faithful!" answered Olinthus, and the door opened. Twelve or fourteen persons were sitting in a semicircle, silent, and seemingly absorbed in thought, and opposite to a crucifix rudely carved in wood.

They lifted up their eyes when Olinthus entered, without speaking; the Nazarene himself, before he accosted them, knelt suddenly down, and by his moving lips, and his eyes fixed steadfastly on the crucifix, Apæcides saw that he prayed inly. This rite performed, Olinthus turned to the congregation—"Men and brethren," said he, "start not to behold amongst you a priest of Isis; he hath sojourned with the blind, but the Spirit hath fallen on him—he desires to see, to hear, and to understand."

"Let him," said one of the assembly; and Apæcides beheld in the speaker a man still younger than himself, of a countenance equally worn and pallid, of an eye which equally spoke of the restless and fiery operations of a working mind.

"Let him," repeated a second voice, and he who thus spoke was in the prime of manhood; his bronzed skin and Asiatic features bespoke him a son of Syria—he had been a robber in his youth.

"Let him," said a third voice; and the priest, again turning to regard the speaker, saw an old man with a long gray beard, whom he recognized as a slave to the wealthy Diomed.

"Let him," repeated simultaneously the rest—men who, with two exceptions, were evidently of the inferior ranks. In these exceptions, Apæcides noted an officer of the guard, and an Alexandrian merchant.

"We do not," recommenced Olinthus—"we do not bind you to secrecy; we impose on you no oaths (as some of our weaker brethren would do) not to betray us. It is true, indeed, that there is no absolute law against us; but the multitude, more savage than their rulers, thirst for our lives. So, my friends, when Pilate would have hesitated, it was *the people* who shouted, 'Christ to the cross!' But we bind you not to our safety—no! Betray us to the crowd—impeach, calumniate, malign us if you will:—we are above death, we should walk cheerfully to the den of the lion, or the rack of the torturer—we can trample down the darkness of the grave, and what is death to a criminal is eternity to the Christian."

A low and applauding murmer ran through the assembly.

"Thou comest amongst us as an examiner, mayest thou remain a convert! Our religion? you behold it! Yon cross our sole image, yon scroll the mysteries of our Cære and Eleusis! Our morality? it is in our lives!—sinners we all have been; who now can accuse us of a crime? we have baptized ourselves from the past. Think not that this is of us, it is of God. Approach, Medon," beckoning to the old slave who had spoken third for the admission of Apæcides, "thou art the sole man amongst us who is not free. But in heaven, the last shall be first: so with us. Unfold your scroll, read, and explain."

Useless would it be for us to accompany the lecture of Medon, or the comments of the congregation. Familiar now are those doctrines, then strange and new. Eighteen centuries have left us little to expound upon the lore of Scripture or the life of Christ. To us, too, there would seem little congenial in the doubts that occurred to a heathen priest, and little learned in the answers they received from men, uneducated, rude, and simple, possessing only the knowledge that they were greater than they seemed.

There was one thing that greatly touched the Neapolitan: when the lecture was concluded, they heard a very gentle knock at the door; the password was given, and replied to; the door opened, and two young children, the eldest of whom might have told its seventh year, entered timidly; they were the children of the master of the house, that dark and hardy Syrian, whose youth had been spent in pillage and bloodshed. The eldest of the congregation (it was that old slave) opened to them his arms; they fled to the shelter—they crept to his breast—and his hard features smiled as he caressed them. And then these bold and fervent men, nursed in vicissitude, beaten by the rough winds of life—men of mailed and impervious fortitude, ready to affront a world, prepared for torment and armed for death—men, who presented all imaginable contrast to the weak nerves, the light hearts, the tender fragility of childhood; crowded round the infants, smoothing their rugged brows, and composing their bearded lips to kindly and fostering smiles: and then the old man opened the scroll, and he taught the infants to repeat after him that beautiful prayer which we still dedicate to the Lord, and still teach to our children; and then he told them, in simple phrase, of God's love to the young, and how not a sparrow falls but His eye sees it. This lovely custom of infant initiation was long cherished by the early Church, in memory of the words which said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and was perhaps the origin of the superstitious calumny which ascribed to the Nazarenes the crime which the Nazarene, when victorious, attributed to the Jew, viz. the decoying children to hideous rites, at which they were secretly immolated.

And the stern paternal penitent seemed to feel in the innocence of his children a return into early life—life ere yet it sinned: he followed the motion of their young lips with an earnest gaze; he smiled as they repeated, with hushed and reverent looks, the holy words; and when the lesson was done, and they ran, released, and gladly to his knee, he clasped them to his breast, kissed them again and again, and tears flowed fast down his cheek—tears, of which it would have been impossible to trace the source, so mingled they were with joy and sorrow, penitence and hope, remorse for himself and love for them!

Something, I say, there was in this scene which peculiarly affected Apæcides; and, in truth, it is difficult to conceive a ceremony more appropriate to the religion of benevolence, more appealing to the household and

every-day affections, striking a more sensitive chord in the human breast.

It was at this time that an inner door opened gently, and a very old man entered the chamber, leaning on a staff. At his presence, the whole congregation rose; there was an expression of deep, affectionate respect upon every countenance; and Apæcides, gazing on his countenance, felt attracted towards him by an irresistible sympathy. No man ever looked upon that face without love; for there had dwelt the smile of the Deity, the incarnation of divinest love;—and the glory of the smile had never passed away!

"My children, God be with you!" said the old man, stretching his arms; and as he spoke the infants ran to his knee. He sat down, and they nestled fondly to his bosom. It was beautiful to see that mingling of the extremes of life—the rivers gushing from their early source—the majestic stream gliding to the ocean of eternity! As the light of declining day seems to mingle earth and heaven, making the outline of each scarce visible, and blending the harsh mountain-tops with the sky; even so did the smile of that benign old age appear to hallow the aspect of those around, to blend together the strong distinctions of varying years, and to diffuse over infancy and manhood the light of that heaven into which it must so soon vanish and be lost.

"Father," said Olinthus, "thou on whose form the miracle of the Redeemer worked; thou who wert snatched from the grave to become the living witness of His mercy and His power; behold! a stranger in our meeting—a new lamb gathered to the fold!"

"Let me bless him," said the old man: the throng gave way. Apæcides approached him as by an instinct: he fell on his knees before him—the old man laid his hand on the priest's head, and blessed him, but not aloud. As his lips moved, his eyes were upturned, and tears—those tears that good men only shed in the hope of happiness to another—flowed fast down his cheeks.

The children were on either side of the convert; his heart was theirs—he had become as one of them—to enter into the kingdom of heaven!

CHAPTER IV.

THE STREAM OF LOVE RUNS ON—WHITHER?

Days are like years in the love of the young, when no bar, no obstacle, is between their hearts—when the sun shines, and the course runs smooth—when their love is prosperous and confessed. Ione no longer concealed from Glaucus the attachment she felt for him, and their talk now was only of their love. Over the rapture of the present, the hopes of the future glowed like the heaven above the gardens of spring. They went in their trustful thoughts far down the stream of time; they laid out the chart of their destiny to come; they suffered the light of to-day to suffuse the morrow. In the youth of their hearts it seemed as if care, and change, and death, were as things unknown. Perhaps they loved each other the more, because the condition of the world left to Glaucus no aim and no wish but love;—because the distractions common in free states to men's affection existed not for the Athenian; because his country wooed him not to the bustle of civil life; because ambition furnished no counterpoise to love: and, therefore, over their schemes and their projects, love only reigned. In the iron age, they imagined themselves of the golden, doomed only to live and to love.

To the superficial observer, who interests himself only in characters strongly marked and broadly colored, both the lovers may seem of too slight and commonplace a mould: in the delineation of characters purposely subdued, the reader sometimes imagines that there is a want of character; perhaps, indeed, I wrong the real nature of these two lovers, by not painting more impressively their stronger individualities. But in dwelling so much on their bright and bird-like existence, I am influenced almost insensibly by the forethought of the changes that await them, and for which they were so ill prepared. It was this very softness and gaiety of life that contrasted most strongly the vicissitudes of their coming fate. For the oak without fruit or blossom, whose hard and rugged heart is fitted for the storm, there is less fear than for the delicate branches of the myrtle, and the laughing clusters of the vine

They had now advanced far into August —the next month their marriage was fixed, and the threshold of Glaucus was already wreathed with garlands; and nightly, by the door of Ione, he poured forth the rich libations. He existed no longer for his gay companions; he was ever with Ione. In the mornings they beguiled the sun with music; in the evenings they forsook the crowded haunts of the gay for excursions on the water, or along the fertile and vine-clad plains that lay beneath the fatal mount of Vesuvius. The earth shook no more; the lively Pompeians forgot even that there had gone forth so terrible a warning of their approaching doom. Glaucus imagined that convulsion, in the vanity of his heathen religion, an especial interposition of the gods, less in behalf of his own safety than that of Ione. He offered up the sacrifices of gratitude at the temples of his faith; and even the altar of Isis was covered with his votive garlands; —as to the prodigy of the animated marble, he blushed at the effect it had produced on him. He believed it, indeed, to have been wrought by the magic of man; but the result convinced him that it betokened not the anger of a goddess.

Of Arbaces, they heard only that he still lived; stretched on the bed of suffering, he recovered slowly from the effect of the shock he had sustained—he left the lovers unmolested—but it was only to brood over the hour and the method of revenge.

Alike in their mornings at the house of Ione, and in their evening excursions, Nydia was usually their constant, and often their sole, companion. They did not guess the secret fires which consumed her:—the abrupt freedom with which she mingled in their conversation—her capricious and often her peevish moods found ready indulgence in the recollection of the service they owed her, and their compassion for her affliction. They felt an interest in her, perhaps, the greater and more affectionate from the very strangeness and waywardness of her nature, her singular alternations of passion and softness—the mixture of ignorance and genius—of delicacy and rudeness—of the quick humors of the child, and the proud calmness of the woman. Although she refused to accept of freedom, she was constantly suffered to be free; she went where she listed; no curb was put either on her words or actions; they felt for one so darkly fated, and so susceptible of every wound, the same pitying and compliant indulgence the mother feels for a spoiled and sickly child,—dreading to impose authority, even where they imagined it for her benefit. She availed herself of this license, by refusing the companionship of the slave whom they wished to attend her. With the slender staff by which she guided her steps, she went now, as in her former unprotected state, along the populous streets: it was almost miraculous to perceive how quickly and how dexterously she threaded every crowd, avoiding every danger, and could find her benighted way through the most intricate windings of the city. But her chief delight was still in visiting the few feet of ground which made the garden of Glaucus;—in tending the flowers that at least repaid her love. Sometimes she entered the chamber where he sat, and sought a conversation, which she nearly always broke off abruptly —for conversation with Glaucus only tended to one subject—*Ione;* and that name from his lips inflicted agony upon her. Often she bitterly repented the service she had rendered to Ione; often she said inly, "If she had fallen, Glaucus could have loved her no longer;" and then dark and fearful thoughts crept into her breast.

She had not experienced fully the trials that were in store for her, when she had been thus generous. She had never before been present when Glaucus and Ione were together; she had never heard that voice so kind to her, so much softer to another. The shock that crushed her heart with the tidings that Glaucus loved, had at first only saddened and benumbed;—by degrees jealousy took a wilder and fiercer shape; it partook of hatred—it whispered revenge. As you see the wind only agitate the green leaf upon the bough, while the leaf which has lain withered and seared on the ground, bruised and trampled upon, till the sap and life are gone, is suddenly whirled aloft—now here—now there—without stay and without rest; so the love which visits the happy and the hopeful hath but freshness on its wings; its violence is but sportive. But the heart that hath fallen from the green things of life,

that is without hope, that hath no summer in its fibres, is torn and whirled by the same wind that but caresses its brethren;—it hath no bough to cling to—it is dashed from path to path—till the winds fall, and it is crushed into the mire for ever.

The friendless childhood of Nydia had hardened prematurely her character; perhaps the heated scenes of profligacy through which she had passed, seemingly unscathed, had ripened her passions, though they had not sullied her purity. The orgies of Burbo might only have disgusted, the banquets of the Egyptian might only have terrified, at the moment; but the winds that pass unheeded over the soil leave seeds behind them. As darkness, too, favors the imagination, so, perhaps, her very blindness contributed to feed with wild and delirious visions the love of the unfortunate girl. The voice of Glaucus had been the first that had sounded musically to her ear; his kindness made a deep impression upon her mind; when he had left Pompeii in the former year, she had treasured up in her heart every word he had uttered; and when any one told her that this friend and patron of the poor flower-girl was the most brilliant and the most graceful of the young revellers of Pompeii, she had felt a pleasing pride in nursing his recollection. Even the task which she imposed upon herself, of tending his flowers, served to keep him in her mind; she associated him with all that was most charming to her impressions; and when she had refused to express what image she fancied Ione to resemble, it was partly, perhaps, that whatever was bright and soft in nature she had already combined with the thought of Glaucus. If any of my readers ever loved at an age which they would now smile to remember—an age in which fancy forestalled the reason; let them say whether that love, among all its strange and complicated delicacies, was not, above all other and later passions, susceptible of jealousy? I seek not here the cause: I know that it is commonly the fact.

When Glaucus returned to Pompeii, Nydia had told another year of her life; that year, with its sorrows, its loneliness, its trials, had greatly developed her mind and heart; and when the Athenian drew her unconsciously to his breast, deeming her still in soul as in years a child—when he kissed her smooth cheek, and wound his arm round her trembling frame, Nydia felt suddenly, and as by revelation, that those feelings she had long and innocently cherished were of love. Doomed to be rescued from tyranny by Glaucus—doomed to take shelter under his roof—doomed to breathe, but for so brief a time, the same air—and doomed, in the first rush of a thousand happy, grateful, delicious sentiments of an overflowing heart, to hear that he loved another; to be commissioned to that other, the messenger, the minister; to feel all at once that utter nothingness which she was—which she ever must be, but which, till then, her young mind had not taught her,—that utter nothingness to him who was all to her; what wonder that, in her wild and passionate soul, all the elements jarred discordant; that if love reigned over the whole, it was not the love which is born of the more sacred and soft emotions? Sometimes she dreaded only lest Glaucus should discover her secret; sometimes she felt indignant that it was *not* suspected; it was a sign of contempt—could he imagine that she presumed so far? Her feelings to Ione ebbed and flowed with every hour; now she loved her because *he* did; now she hated her for the same cause. There were moments when she could have murdered her unconscious mistress; moments when she could have laid down life for her. These fierce and tremulous alternations of passion were too severe to be borne long. Her health gave way, though she felt it not—her cheek paled—her step grew feebler—tears came to her eyes more often, and relieved her less.

One morning, when she repaired to her usual task in the garden of the Athenian, she found Glaucus under the columns of the peristyle, with a merchant of the town; he was selecting jewels for his destined bride. He had already fitted up her apartment; the jewels he bought that day were placed also within it—they were never fated to grace the fair form of Ione; they may be seen at this day among the disinterred treasures of Pompeii, in the chambers of the studio at Naples.*

* Several bracelets, chains, and jewels, were found in the house.

"Come hither, Nydia; put down thy vase, and come hither. Thou must take this chain from me—stay—there, I have put it on.—There, Servilius, does it not become her?"

"Wonderfully!" answered the jeweller; for jewellers were well-bred and flattering men, even at that day. "But when these earrings glitter in the ears of the noble Ione, *then*, by Bacchus! you will see whether my art adds any thing to beauty."

"Ione?" repeated Nydia, who had hitherto acknowledged by smiles and blushes the gift of Glaucus.

"Yes," replied the Athenian, carelessly toying with the gems; "I am choosing a present for Ione, but there are none worthy of her."

He was startled as he spoke by an abrupt gesture of Nydia; she tore the chain violently from her neck, and dashed it on the ground.

"How is this? What, Nydia, dost thou not like the bauble? art thou offended?"

"You treat me ever as a slave and as a child," replied the Thessalian, with a breast heaving with ill-suppressed sobs, and she turned hastily away to the opposite corner of the garden.

Glaucus did not attempt to follow, or to soothe; he was offended; he continued to examine the jewels and to comment on their fashion—to object to this and to praise that, and finally to be talked by the merchant into buying all; the safest plan for a lover, and a plan that any one will do right to adopt,—provided always that he can obtain an Ione!

When he had completed his purchase and dismissed the jeweller, he retired into his chamber, dressed, mounted his chariot, and went to Ione. He thought no more of the blind girl, or her offence; he had forgotten both the one and the other.

He spent the forenoon with his beautiful Neapolitan, repaired thence to the baths, supped (if, as we have said before, we can justly so translate the three o'clock *cœna* of the Romans) alone, and abroad, for Pompeii had its restaurateurs:—and returning home to change his dress ere he again repaired to the house of Ione, he passed the peristyle, but with the absorbed revery and absent eyes of a man in love, and did not note the form of the poor blind girl, bending exactly in the same place where he had left her. But though he saw her not, her ear recognized at once the sound of his step. She had been counting the moments to his return. He had scarcely entered his favorite chamber which opened on the peristyle, and seated himself musingly on his couch, when he felt his robe timorously touched, and turning, he beheld Nydia kneeling before him, and holding up to him a handful of flowers—a gentle and appropriate peace-offering;—her eyes, darkly upheld to his own, streamed with tears.

"I have offended thee," said she, sobbing, "and for the first time. I would die rather than cause thee a moment's pain—say that thou wilt forgive me. See! I have taken up the chain; I have put it on; I will never part from it—it is thy gift."

"My dear Nydia," returned Glaucus, and raising her, he kissed her forehead; "think of it no more! But why, my child, wert thou so suddenly angry? I could not divine the cause!"

"Do not ask!" said she, coloring violently. "I am a thing full of faults and humors; you know I am but a child—you say so often: is it from a child that you can expect a reason for every folly?"

"But, prettiest, you will soon be a child no more; and if you would have us treat you as a woman, you must learn to govern these singular impulses and gales of passion. Think not I chide: no, it is for your happiness only I speak."

"It is true," said Nydia, "I must learn to govern myself. I must hide, I must suppress, my heart. This is a woman's task and duty; methinks her virtue is hypocrisy."

"Self-control is not deceit, my Nydia," returned the Athenian; "and that is the virtue necessary alike to man and to woman: it is the true senatorial toga, the badge of the dignity it covers."

"Self-control! self-control! Well, well, what you say is right! When I listen to you, Glaucus, my wildest thoughts grow calm and sweet, and a delicious serenity falls over me. Advise, ah! guide me ever, my preserver!"

"Thy affectionate heart will be thy best guide, Nydia, when thou hast learned to regulate its feelings."

"Ah! that will be never," sighed Nydia, wiping away her tears.

"Say not so: the first effort is the only difficult one."

"I have made many first efforts," answered Nydia, innocently. "But you, my Mentor, do you find it so easy to control yourself? Can you conceal, can you even regulate, your love for Ione?"

"Love! dear Nydia; ah! that is quite another matter," answered the young preceptor.

"I thought so!" returned Nydia, with a melancholy smile. "Glaucus, wilt thou take my poor flowers? Do with them as thou wilt—thou canst give them to Ione," added she, with a little hesitation.

"Nay, Nydia," answered Glaucus kindly, divining something of jealousy in her language, though he imagined it only the jealousy of a vain and susceptible child; "I will not give thy pretty flowers to any one. Sit here and weave them into a garland; I will wear it this night: it is not the first those delicate fingers have woven for me."

The poor girl delightedly sat down beside Glaucus. She drew from her girdle a ball of the many-colored threads, or rather slender ribands, used in the weaving of garlands, and which (for it was her professional occupation) she carried constantly with her, and began quickly and gracefully to commence her task. Upon her young cheeks the tears were already dried, a faint but happy smile played round her lips;—childlike, indeed, she was sensible only of the joy of the present hour: she was reconciled to Glaucus: he had forgiven her—she was beside him—he played caressingly with her silken hair—his breath fanned her cheek,—Ione, the cruel Ione, was not by—none other demanded, divided, his care. Yes, she was happy and forgetful; it was one of the few moments in her brief and troubled life that it was sweet to treasure, to recall. As the butterfly, allured by the winter sun, basks for a little while in the sudden light, ere yet the wind awakes and the frost comes on, which shall blast it before the eve,—she rested beneath a beam, which, by contrast with the wonted skies, was not chilling; and the instinct which should have warned her of its briefness, bade her only gladden in its smile.

"Thou hast beautiful locks," said Glaucus. "They were once, I ween well, a mother's delight."

Nydia sighed; it would seem that she had not been born a slave; but she ever shunned the mention of her parentage, and, whether obscure or noble, certain it is that her birth was never known by her benefactors, nor by any one in those distant shores, even to the last. The child of sorrow and of mystery, she came and went as some bird that enters our chamber for a moment; we see it flutter for a while before us, we knew not whence it flew or to what region it escapes.

Nydia sighed, and after a short pause, without answering the remark, said,—

"But do I weave too many roses in my wreath, Glaucus? They tell me it is thy favorite flower."

"And ever favored, my Nydia, be it by those who have the soul of poetry: it is the flower of love, of festivals; it is also the flower we dedicate to silence and to death; it blooms on our brows in life, while life be worth the having; it is scattered above our sepulchre when we are no more."

"Ah! would," said Nydia, "instead of this perishable wreath, that I could take thy web from the hand of the Fates, and insert the roses *there!*"

"Pretty one! thy wish is worthy of a voice so attuned to song; it is uttered in the spirit of song; and, whatever my doom, I thank thee."

"Whatever thy doom! is it not already destined to all things bright and fair? My wish was vain. The Fates will be as tender to thee as I should."

"It might not be so, Nydia, were it not for love! While youth lasts, I may forget my country for a while. But what Athenian, in his graver manhood, can think of Athens as she was, and be contented that *he* is happy, while *she* is fallen?—fallen, and for ever!"

"And why for ever?"

"As ashes cannot be rekindled—as love once dead never can revive, so freedom departed from a people is never regained. But talk we not of these matters unsuited to thee."

"To me, oh! thou errest. I, too, have my sighs for Greece; my cradle was rocked

at the feet of Olympus; the gods have left the mountain, but their traces may be seen —seen in the hearts of their worshippers, seen in the beauty of their clime: they tell me it *is* beautiful, and *I* have felt its airs, to which even these are harsh—its sun, to which these skies are chill. Oh! talk to me of Greece! Poor fool that I am, I can comprehend thee! and methinks, had I yet lingered on those shores, had I been a Grecian maid whose happy fate it was to love and to be loved, I myself could have armed my lover for another Marathon, a new Platæa. Yes, the hand that now weaves the roses should have woven thee the olive crown!"

"If such a day could come!" said Glaucus, catching the enthusiasm of the blind Thessalian, and half rising.—"But no! the sun has set, and the night only bids us be forgetful,—and in forgetfulness be gay;—weave still the roses!"

But it was with a melancholy tone of forced gaiety that the Athenian uttered the last words: and sinking into a gloomy revery, he was only wakened from it, a few minutes afterwards, by the voice of Nydia, as she sang in a low tone the following words which he had once taught her:

THE APOLOGY FOR PLEASURE.

I.

"Who will assume the bays
That the hero wore?
Wreaths on the Tomb of Days
Gone evermore!
Who shall disturb the brave,
Or one leaf of their holy grave?
The laurel is vow'd to them,
Leave the bay on its sacred stem!
But this, the rose, the fading rose,
Alike for slave and freeman grows!

II.

If Memory sit beside the dead
With tombs her only treasure;
If Hope is lost and Freedom fled,
The more excuse for Pleasure.
Come, weave the wreath, the roses weave,
The rose at least is ours;
To feeble hearts our fathers leave,
In pitying scorn, the flowers!

III.

On the summit, worn and hoary,
Of Phyle's solemn hill,
The tramp of the brave is still!
And still in the saddening Mart,
The pulse of that mighty heart,
Whose very blood was glory!
Glaucopis forsakes her own,
The angry gods forget us;
But yet, the blue streams along,
Walk the feet of the silver Song;
And the night-bird wakes the moon;
And the bees in the blushing noon
Haunt the heart of the old Hymettus!
We are fallen, but not forlorn,
If something is left to cherish;
As Love was the earliest born,
So Love is the last to perish.

IV.

Wreathe then the roses, wreathe!
The BEAUTIFUL still is ours,
While the stream shall flow, and the sky shall glow,
The BEAUTIFUL still is ours!
Whatever is fair, or soft or bright,
In the lap of day or the arms of night,
Whispers our soul of Greece—of Greece,
And hushes our care with a voice of peace.
Wreathe then the roses, wreathe!
They tell me of earlier hours;
And I hear the heart of my Country breathe
From the lips of the Stranger's flowers."

CHAPTER V.

NYDIA ENCOUNTERS JULIA.—INTERVIEW OF THE HEATHEN SISTER AND CONVERTED BROTHER.—AN ATHENIAN'S NOTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

"WHAT happiness to Ione! what bliss to be ever by the side of Glaucus, to hear his voice!—And *she* too can see him!"

Such was the soliloquy of the blind girl, as she walked alone and at twilight to the house of her new mistress, whither Glaucus had already preceded her. Suddenly she was interrupted in her fond thoughts by a female voice.

"Blind flower-girl, whither goest thou? There is no pannier under thine arm; hast thou sold all thy flowers?"

The person thus accosting Nydia was a lady of a handsome but a bold and unmaidenly countenance; it was Julia, the daughter of Diomed. Her veil was half raised as she spoke; she was accompanied by Diomed himself, and by a slave carrying a lantern before them—the merchant and his daughter were returning home from a supper at one of their neighbors.

"Dost thou not remember my voice?" continued Julia. "I am the daughter of Diomed the wealthy."

"Ah! forgive me; yes, I recall the tones of your voice. No, noble Julia, I have no flowers to sell!"

"I heard that thou wert purchased by the beautiful Greek, Glaucus; is that true, pretty slave?" asked Julia.

"I serve the Neapolitan, Ione," replied Nydia, evasively.

"Ha! and it is true then——"

"Come, come!" interrupted Diomed, with his cloak up to his mouth, "the night grows cold; I cannot stay here while you prate to that blind girl: come, let her follow you home, if you wish to speak to her."

"Do, child," said Julia, with the air of one not accustomed to be refused: "I have much to ask of thee: come."

"I cannot this night, it grows late," answered Nydia. "I must be at home; I am not free, noble Julia."

"What! the meek Ione will chide thee?—Ay, I doubt not she is a secend Thalestris. But come, then, to-morrow: do—remember I have been thy friend of old."

"I will obey thy wishes," answered Nydia; and Diomed again impatiently summoned his daughter: she was obliged to proceed, with the main question she had desired to put to Nydia unasked.

Meanwhile we return to Ione. The interval of time that had elapsed that day between the first and second visit of Glaucus had not been too gaily spent: she had received a visit from her brother. Since the night he had assisted in saving her from the Egyptian, she had not before seen him.

Occupied with his own thoughts—thoughts of so serious and intense a nature—the young priest had thought little of his sister: in truth, men perhaps of that fervent order of mind which is ever aspiring *above* earth are but little prone to the earthlier affections; and it had been long since Apæcides had sought those soft and friendly interchanges of thought, those sweet confidences, which in his earlier youth had bound him to Ione, and which are so natural to that endearing connection which existed between them.

Ione, however, had not ceased to regret his estrangement: she attributed it, at present, to the engrossing duties of his severe fraternity. And often, amidst all her bright hopes, and her new attachment to her betrothed—often, when she thought of her brother's brow prematurely furrowed, his unsmiling lip, and bended frame, she sighed to think that the service of the gods could throw so deep a shadow over that earth which the gods created.

But this day when he visited her there was a strange calmness on his features, a more quiet and self-possessed expression in his sunken eyes, than she had marked for years. This apparent improvement was but momentary—it was a false calm, which the least breeze could ruffle.

"May the god's bless thee, my brother!" said she, embracing him.

"The gods! Speak not thus vaguely; perchance there is but *one* God!"

"My brother!"

"What if the sublime faith of the Nazarene be true? What if God be a monarch—One—Invisible—Alone? What if these numerous—countless deities, whose altars fill the earth, be but evil demons, seeking to wean us from the true creed?—This may be the case, Ione!"

"Alas! can we believe it? or if we believed, would it not be a melancholy faith?" answered the Neapolitan. "What! all this beautiful world made only human!—the mountain disenchanted of its Oread—the waters of their Nymph—that beautiful prodigality of faith, which makes every thing divine, consecrating the meanest flowers, bearing celestial whispers in the faintest breeze—wouldst thou deny this, and make the earth mere dust and clay? No, Apæcides; all that is brightest in our hearts is that very credulity which peoples the universe with gods."

Ione answered as a believer in the poesy of the old mythology would answer. We may judge by that reply how obstinate and hard the contest which Christianity had to endure among the heathens. The Graceful Superstition was never silent; every, the most household, action of their lives was entwined with it,—it was a portion of life itself, as the flowers are a part of the thyrsus. At every incident they recurred to a god, every cup of wine was prefaced by a libation: the very garlands on their thresholds were dedicated to some divinity; their ancestors themselves, made holy, presided as Lares over

their hearth and hall. So abundant was belief with them, that in their own climes, at this hour, idolatry has never thoroughly been outrooted: it changes but its objects of worship; it appeals to innumerable saints where once it resorted to divinities; and it pours its crowds, in listening reverence, to oracles at the shrines of St. Januarius or St. Stephen, instead of to those of Isis or Apollo.

But these superstitions were not to the early Christians the object of contempt so much as of horror. They did not believe, with the quiet scepticism of the heathen philosopher, that the gods were inventions of the priests; nor even, with the vulgar, that, according to the dim light of history, they had been mortals like themselves. They imagined the heathen divinities to be evil spirits—they transplanted to Italy and to Greece the gloomy demons of India and the East; and in Jupiter or in Mars they shuddered at the representative of Moloch or of Satan.*

Apæcides had not yet adopted formally the Christian faith, but he was already on the brink of it. He already participated the doctrines of Olinthus—he already imagined that the lively imaginations of the heathen were the suggestions of the arch-enemy of mankind. The innocent and natural answer of Ione made him shudder. He hastened to reply vehemently, and yet so confusedly, that Ione feared for his reason more than she dreaded his violence.

"Ah, my brother!" said she, "these hard duties of thine have shattered thy very sense. Come to me, Apæcides, my brother, my own brother; give me thy hand, let me wipe the dew from thy brow;—chide me not now, I understand thee not; think only that Ione could not offend thee!"

"Ione," said Apæcides, drawing her towards him, and regarding her tenderly, "can I think that this beautiful form, this kind heart, may be destined to an eternity of torment?"

"Dii meliora! the gods forbid!" said Ione, in the customary form of words by which her contemporaries thought an omen might be averted.

The words, and still more the superstition they implied, wounded the ear of Apæcides. He rose, muttering to himself, turned from the chamber, then, stopping half-way, gazed wistfully on Ione, and extended his arms.

Ione flew to them in joy; he kissed her earnestly, and then he said,—

"Farewell, my sister! when we next meet, thou mayst be to me as nothing; take thou, then, this embrace—full yet of all the tender reminiscences of childhood, when faith and hope, creeds, customs, interests, objects, were the same to us. Now, the tie is to be broken!'

With these strange words he left the house.

The great and severest trial of the primitive Christians was indeed this; their conversion separated them from their dearest bonds. They could not associate with beings whose commonest actions, whose commonest forms of speech, were impregnated with idolatry. They shuddered at the blessing of love; to their ears it was uttered in a demon's name. This, their misfortune, was their strength; if it divided them from the rest of the world, it was to unite them proportionally to each other. They were men of iron who wrought forth the Word of God, and verily the bonds that bound them were of iron also!

Glaucus found Ione in tears; he had already assumed the sweet privilege to console. He drew from her a recital of her interview with her brother; but in her confused account of language, itself so confused to one not prepared for it, he was equally at a loss with Ione to conceive the intentions or the meaning of Apæcides.

"Hast thou ever heard much," asked she, "of this new sect of the Nazarenes, of which my brother spoke?"

"I have often heard enough of the votaries," returned Glaucus, "but of their exact tenets know I nought, save that in their doctrine there seemeth something preternaturally chilling and morose. They live

* In Pompeii, a rough sketch of Pluto delineates that fearful deity in the shape we at present ascribe to the Devil, and decorates him with the paraphernalia of horns and a tail. But, in all probability, it was from the mysterious Pan, the haunter of solitary places, the inspirer of vague and soul-shaking terrors, that we took the vulgar notion of the outward likeness of the fiend; it corresponds exactly to the cloven-footed Satan. And in the lewd and profligate rites of Pan, Christians might well imagine they traced the deceptions of the Devil.

apart from their kind; they affect to be shocked even at our simple uses of garlands; they have no sympathies with the cheerful amusements of life; they utter awful threats of the coming destruction of the world: they appear, in one word, to have brought their unsmiling and gloomy creed out of the cave of Trophonius. Yet," continued Glaucus, after a slight pause, "they have not wanted men of great power and genius, nor converts, even among the Areopagites of Athens. Well do I remember to have heard my father speak of one strange guest at Athens, many years ago; methinks his name was PAUL.

"My father was amongst a mighty crowd that gathered on one of our immemorial hills to hear this sage of the East expound: through the wide throng there rang not a single murmur!—the jest and the roar, with which our native orators are received, were hushed for him;—and when on the loftiest summit of that hill, raised above the breathless crowd below, stood this mysterious visitor, his mien and his countenance awed every heart, even before a sound left his lips. He was a man, I have heard my father say, of no tall stature, but of noble and impressive mien; his robes were dark and ample; the declining sun, for it was evening, shone aslant upon his form as it rose aloft, motionless and commanding; his countenance was much worn and marked, as of one who had braved alike misfortune and the sternest vicissitude of many climes; but his eyes were bright with an almost unearthly fire; and when he raised his arm to speak, it was with the majesty of a man into whom the Spirit of a God hath rushed!

"'Men of Athens!' he is reported to have said, 'I find amongst ye an altar with this inscription—TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Ye worship in ignorance the same Deity I serve. To you *unknown* till now, to you be it now revealed.'

"Then declared that solemn man how this great Maker of all things, who had appointed unto man his several tribes and his various homes—the Lord of earth and the universal heaven, dwelt not in temples made with hands; that His presence, His spirit, were in the air we breathed:—our life and our being were with Him. 'Think you,' he cried, 'that the Invisible is like your statues of gold and marble? Think you that He needeth sacrifice from you: He who made heaven and earth?' Then spake he of fearful and coming times, of the end of the world, of a second rising of the dead, whereof an assurance had been given to man, in the resurrection of the mighty Being whose religion he came to preach.

"When he thus spoke, the long-pent murmur went forth, and the philosophers that were mingled with the people, muttered their sage contempt; there might you have seen the chilling frown of the Stoic, and the cynic's sneer;*—and the Epicurean, who believeth not even in our own Elysium, muttered a pleasant jest, and swept laughing through the crowd: but the deep heart of the people was touched and thrilled; and they trembled, though they knew not why, for verily the stranger had the voice and majesty of a man to whom 'The Unknown God' had committed the preaching of His faith."

Ione listened with rapt attention, and the serious and earnest manner of the narrator betrayed the impression that he himself had received from one who had been amongst the audience that on the hill of the heathen Mars had heard the first tidings of the word of Christ!

CHAPTER VI.

THE PORTER—THE GIRL—AND THE GLADIATOR.

THE door of Diomed's house stood open, and Medon, the old slave, sat at the bottom of the steps by which you ascended to the mansion. That luxurious mansion of the rich merchant of Pompeii is still to be seen just without the gates of the city, at the commencement of the Street of Tombs. It was a gay neighborhood, despite the dead. On the opposite side, but at some yards nearer the gate, was a spacious hostelry, at which those brought by business or by pleasure to Pompeii often stopped to refresh

* "The haughty Cynic scowl'd his grovelling hate,
And the soft Garden's rose-encircled child
Smil'd unbelief, and shudder'd as he smil'd."
PRAED, *Prize Poem "Athens."*

themselves. In the space before the entrance of the inn now stood wagons, and carts, and chariots, some just arrived, some just quitting, in all the bustle of an animated and popular resort of public entertainment. Before the door, some farmers, seated on a bench by a small circular table, were talking over their morning cups, on the affairs of their calling. On the side of the door itself was painted gaily and freshly the eternal sign of the checkers.* By the roof of the inn stretched a terrace, on which some females, wives of the farmers abovementioned, were, some seated, some leaning over the railing, and conversing with their friends below. In a deep recess, at a little distance, was a covered seat, in which some two or three poorer travellers were resting themselves, and shaking the dust from their garments. On the other side stretched a wide space, originally the burial-ground of a more ancient race than the present denizens of Pompeii, and now converted into the Ustrinum, or place for the burning of the dead. Above this rose the terraces of a gay villa, half hid by trees.

The tombs themselves, with their graceful and varied shapes, the flowers and the foliage that surrounded them, made no melancholy feature in the prospect. Hard by the gate of the city, in a small niche, stood the still form of the well-disciplined Roman sentry, the sun shining brightly on his polished crest, and the lance on which he leaned. The gate itself was divided into three arches, the centre one for vehicles, the others for the foot-passengers; and on either side rose the massive walls which girt the city, composed, patched, repaired at a thousand different epochs, according as war, time, or the earthquake had shattered that vain protection. At frequent intervals rose square towers, whose summits broke in picturesque rudeness the regular line of the wall, and contrasted well with the modern buildings gleaming whitely by.

The curving road, which in that direction leads from Pompeii to Herculaneum, wound out of sight amidst hanging vines, above which frowned the sullen majesty of Vesuvius.

"Hast thou heard the news, old Medon?"

* There is another inn within the wall similarly adorned.

said a young woman, with a pitcher in her hand, as she paused by Diomed's door to gossip a moment with the slave, ere she repaired to the neighboring inn to fill the vessel, and coquet with the travellers.

"The news! what news?" said the slave, raising his eyes moodily from the ground.

"Why, there passed through the gate this morning, no doubt ere thou wert well awake, such a visitor to Pompeii!"

"Ay," said the slave, indifferently.

"Yes, a present from the noble Pomponianus."

"A present! I thought thou saidst a visitor!"

"It is both visitor and present. Know, O dull and stupid! that it is a most beautiful young tiger for our approaching games in the amphitheatre. Hear you that, Medon? Oh, what pleasure! I declare I shall not sleep a wink till I see it; they say it has such a roar!"

"Poor fool!" said Medon, sadly and cynically.

"Fool me no fool, old churl! It is a pretty thing, a tiger, especially if we could but find somebody for him to eat. We have now a lion and a tiger; only consider that, Medon! and for want of two good criminals, perhaps we shall be forced to see them eat each other. By-the-by, your son is a gladiator, a handsome man and a strong, can you not persuade him to fight the tiger? Do now, you would oblige me mightily; nay, you would be a benefactor to the whole town."

"Vah, vah!" said the slave, with great asperity; "think of thine own danger ere thou thus pratest of my poor boy's death."

"My own danger!" said the girl, frightened and looking hastily round—"Avert the omen! let thy words fall on thine own head!" And the girl as she spoke touched a talisman suspended round her neck. "'Thine own danger!' what danger threatens me?"

"Had the earthquake but a few nights since no warning?" said Medon. "Has it not a voice? Did it not say to us all, 'Prepare for death, the end of all things is at hand?'"

"Bah, stuff!" said the young woman, settling the folds of her tunic. "Now thou talkest as they say the Nazarenes talk—me-

thinks thou art one of them. Well, I can prate with thee, gray croaker, no more: thou growest worse and worse—*Vale!* O Hercules, send us a man for the lion—and another for the tiger!

"Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row!
Lo the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmæna,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hush'd arena;
Talk while you may—you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death.
Tramp, tramp, how gaily they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!"

Chanting in a silver and clear voice this feminine ditty, and holding up her tunic from the dusty road, the young woman stepped lightly across to the crowded hostelry.

"My poor son!" said the slave, half aloud, "is it for things like this thou art to be butchered? Oh! faith of Christ, I could worship thee in all sincerity, were it but for the horror which thou inspirest for these bloody lists."

The old man's head sank dejectedly on his breast. He remained silent and absorbed, but every now and then with the corner of his sleeve he wiped his eyes. His heart was with his son; he did not see the figure that now approached from the gate with a quick step, and a somewhat fierce and reckless gait and carriage. He did not lift his eyes till the figure paused opposite the place where he sat, and with a soft voice addressed him by the name of—

"Father!"

"My boy! my Lydon! is it indeed thou?" said the old man, joyfully. "Ah, thou wert present to my thoughts."

"I am glad to hear it, my father," said the gladiator, respectfully touching the knees and beard of the slave; "and soon may I be always present with thee, not in thought only."

"Yes, my son—but not in this world," replied the slave, mournfully.

"Talk not thus, O my sire! look cheerfully, for I feel so—I am sure that I shall win the day; and then, the gold I gain buys thy freedom. Oh! my father, it was but a few days since that I was taunted, by one, too, whom I would gladly have undeceived, for he is more generous than the rest of his equals. He is not Roman—he is of Athens—by him I was taunted with the lust of gain—when I demanded what sum was the prize of victory. Alas! he little knew the soul of Lydon!"

"My boy! my boy!" said the old slave, as, slowly ascending the steps, he conducted his son to his own little chamber, communicating with the entrance hall (which in this villa was the peristyle, not the atrium):—you may see it now; it is the third door to the right on entering. (The first door conducts to the staircase; the second is but a false recess, in which there stood a statue of bronze.) "Generous, affectionate, pious as are thy motives," said Medon, when they were thus secured from observation, "thy deed itself is guilt—thou art to risk thy blood for thy father's freedom—that might be forgiven; but the prize of victory is the blood of another. Oh, *that* is a deadly sin; no object can purify it. Forbear! forbear! rather would I be a slave for ever than purchase liberty on such terms!"

"Hush, my father!" replied Lydon, somewhat impatiently; "thou hast picked up in this new creed of thine, of which I pray thee not to speak to me, for the gods that gave me strength denied me wisdom, and I understand not one word of what thou often preachest to me,—thou hast picked up, I say, in this new creed, some singular fantasies of right and wrong. Pardon me, if I offend thee: but reflect! Against whom shall I contend? Oh! couldst thou know those wretches with whom, for thy sake, I assort, thou wouldst think I purified earth by removing one of them. Beasts, whose very lips drop blood; things, all savage, unprincipled in their very courage; ferocious, heartless, senseless; no tie of life can bind them: they know not fear, it is true—but neither know they gratitude, nor charity, nor love; they are made but for their own career, to slaughter without pity, to die without dread! Can thy gods, whosoever they be, look with wrath on a conflict with such as these, and in such a cause? Oh, my father, wherever the powers above gaze down on earth, they behold no duty so sacred, so sanctifying, as the sacrifice offered to an aged parent by the piety of a grateful son!"

The poor old slave, himself deprived of

the lights of knowledge, and only late a convert to the Christian faith, knew not with what arguments to enlighten an ignorance at once so dark, and yet so beautiful in its error. His first impulse was to throw himself on his son's breast—his next to start away—to wring his hands; and in the attempt to reprove, his broken voice lost itself in weeping.

"And if," resumed Lydon,—"if thy Deity (methinks thou wilt own but one!) be indeed that benevolent and pitying Power which thou assertest Him to be, He will know also that thy very faith in Him first confirmed me in that determination thou blamest."

"How! what mean you?" said the slave.

"Why, thou knowest that I, sold in my childhood as a slave, was set free at Rome by the will of my master, whom I had been fortunate enough to please. I hastened to Pompeii to see thee—I found thee already aged and infirm, under the yoke of a capricious and pampered lord—thou hadst lately adopted this new faith, and its adoption made thy slavery doubly painful to thee; it took away all the softening charm of custom, which reconciles us so often to the worst. Didst thou not complain to me, that thou wert compelled to offices that were not odious to thee as a slave, but guilty as a Nazarene? Didst thou not tell me that thy soul shook with remorse, when thou wert compelled to place even a crumb of cake before the Lares that watch over yon impluvium? that thy soul was torn by a perpetual struggle? Didst thou not tell me, that even by pouring wine before the threshold, and calling on the name of some Grecian deity, thou didst fear thou wert incurring penalties worse than those of Tantalus, an eternity of tortures more terrible than those of the Tartarian fields? Didst thou not tell me this? I wondered, I could not comprehend; nor, by Hercules! can I now: but I was thy son, and my sole task was to compassionate and relieve. Could I hear thy groans, could I witness thy mysterious horrors, thy constant anguish, and remain inactive? No! by the immortal gods! the thought struck me like light from Olympus! I had no money, but I had strength and youth—these were thy gifts—I could sell these in my turn for thee! I learned the amount of thy ransom—I learned that the usual prize of a victorious gladiator would doubly pay it. I became a gladiator—I linked myself with those accursed men, scorning, loathing, while I joined—I acquired their skill—blessed be the lesson!—it shall teach me to free my father!"

"Oh, that thou couldst hear Olinthus!" sighed the old man, more and more affected by the virtue of his son, but not less strongly convinced of the criminality of his purpose.

"I will hear the whole world talk, if thou wilt," answered the gladiator gaily; "but not till thou art a slave no more. Beneath thy own roof, my father, thou shalt puzzle this dull brain all day long, ay, and all night too, if it give thee pleasure. Oh, such a spot as I have chalked out for thee!—it is one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine shops of old Julia Felix, in the sunny part of the city, where thou mayst bask before the door in the day—and I will sell the oil and the wine for thee, my father—and then, please Venus (or if it does not please her, since thou lovest not her name, it is all one to Lydon;)—then I say, perhaps thou mayst have a daughter, too, to tend thy gray hairs, and hear shrill voices at thy knee, that shall call thee 'Lydon's father!' Ah! we shall be so happy—the prize can purchase all. Cheer thee! cheer up, my sire!—And now I must away—day wears—the lanista waits me. Come! thy blessing!"

As Lydon thus spoke, he had already quitted the dark chamber of his father; and speaking eagerly, though in a whispered tone, they now stood at the same place in which we introduced the porter at his post.

"O bless thee! bless thee, my brave boy!" said Medon, fervently; "and may the great Power that reads all hearts see the nobleness of thine, and forgive its error!"

The tall shape of the gladiator passed swiftly down the path; the eyes of the slave followed its light, but stately steps, till the last glimpse was gone; and then sinking once more on his seat, his eyes again fastened themselves on the ground. His form, mute and unmoving, as a thing of stone. His heart!—who, in our happier age, can even imagine its struggles—its commotion?

"May I enter?" said a sweet voice. "Is thy mistress Julia within?"

The slave mechanically motioned to the visitor to enter, but she who addressed him could not see the gesture—she repeated her question timidly, but in a louder voice.

"Have I not told thee!" said the slave peevishly: "enter."

"Thanks," said the speaker, plaintively; and the slave, roused by the tone, looked up, and recognized the blind flower-girl. Sorrow can sympathize with affliction—he raised himself, and guided her steps to the head of the adjacent staircase (by which you descended to Julia's apartment), where, summoning a female slave, he consigned to her the charge of the blind girl.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DRESSING-ROOM OF A POMPEIAN BEAUTY. — IMPORTANT CONVERSATION BETWEEN JULIA AND NYDIA.

THE elegant Julia sat in her chamber, with her slaves around her:—like the cubiculum which adjoined it, the room was small, but much larger than the usual apartments appropriated to sleep, which were so diminutive, that few who have not seen the bed-chambers, even in the gayest mansions, can form any notion of the petty pigeon-holes in which the citizens of Pompeii evidently thought it desirable to pass the night. But, in fact, "bed" with the ancients was not that grave, serious, and important part of domestic mysteries, which it is with us. The couch itself was more like a very narrow and small sofa, light enough to be transported easily, and by the occupant himself,* from place to place; and it was, no doubt, constantly shifted from chamber to chamber, according to the caprices of the inmate, or the changes of the season. For that side of the house which was crowded in one month, might, perhaps, be carefully avoided in the next. There was also among the Italians of that period a singular and fastidious apprehension of too much daylight; their darkened chambers, which first appear to us the result of a negligent architecture, were the effect of the most elaborate study. In their porticos and gardens, they courted the sun whenever it so pleased their luxurious tastes. In the interior of their houses they sought rather the coolness and the shade.

Julia's apartment at that season was in the lower part of the house, immediately beneath the state rooms above, and looking upon the garden, with which it was on a level. The wide door, which was glazed, alone admitted the morning rays; yet her eye, accustomed to a certain darkness, was sufficiently acute to perceive exactly what colors were the most becoming—what shade of the delicate rouge gave the brightest beam to her dark glance, and the most youthful freshness to her cheek.

On the table, before which she sat, was a small and circular mirror of the most polished steel: round which, in precise order, were ranged the cosmetics and the unguents —the perfumes and the paints—the jewels and the combs—the ribands and the gold pins, which were destined to add to the natural attractions of beauty the assistance of art and the capricious allurements of fashion. Through the dimness of the room glowed brightly the vivid and various colorings of the wall, in all the dazzling frescos of Pompeian taste. Before the dressing-table, and under the feet of Julia, was spread a carpet, woven from the looms of the East. Near at hand, on another table, was a silver basin and ewer; an extinguished lamp, of most exquisite workmanship, in which the artist had represented a Cupid reposing under the spreading branches of a myrtle-tree; and a small roll of papyrus, containing the softest elegies of Tibullus. Before the door, which communicated with the cubiculum, hung a curtain, richly broidered with gold flowers. Such was the dressing-room of a beauty eighteen centuries ago.

The fair Julia leaned indolently back on her seat, while the ornatrix (*i. e.* hair dresser) slowly piled, one above the other, a mass of small curls; dexterously weaving the false with the true, and carrying the whole fabric to a height that seemed to place the head rather at the centre than the summit of the human form.

Her tunic, of a deep amber, which well

* "Take up thy bed and walk" was (as Sir W. Gell somewhere observes) no metaphorical expression.

set off her dark hair and somewhat embrowned complexion, swept in ample folds to her feet, which were cased in slippers, fastened round the slender ankle by white thongs; while a profusion of pearls were embroidered in the slipper itself, which was of purple, and turned slightly upward, as do the Turkish slippers at this day. An old slave, skilled by long experience in all the arcana of the toilette, stood beside the hair-dresser, with the broad and studded girdle of her mistress over her arm, and giving, from time to time (mingled with judicious flattery to the lady herself), instructions to the mason of the ascending pile.

"Put that pin rather more to the right!—lower—stupid one! Do you not observe how even those beautiful eyebrows are?—One would think you were dressing Corinna, whose face is all of one side. Now put in the flowers—what, fool!—not that dull pink—you are not suiting colors to the dim cheek of Chloris:—it must be the brightest flowers that can alone suit the cheek of the young Julia."

"Gently!" said the lady, stamping her small foot violently: "you pull my hair as if you were plucking up a weed!"

"Dull thing!" continued the directress of the ceremony. "Do you not know how delicate is your mistress?—you are not dressing the coarse horse-hair of the widow Fulvia. Now, then, the riband—that's right. Fair Julia, look in the mirror; saw you ever any thing so lovely as yourself?"

When, after innumerable comments, difficulties, and delays, the intricate tower was at length completed, the next preparation was that of giving to the eyes the soft languish, produced by a dark powder applied to the lids and brows; a small patch cut in the form of a crescent, skilfully placed by the rosy lips, attracted attention to their dimples, and to the teeth, to which already every art had been applied in order to heighten the dazzle of their natural whiteness.

To another slave, hitherto idle, was now consigned the charge of arranging the jewels—the earrings of pearl (two to each ear)—the massive bracelets of gold—the chain formed of rings of the same metal, to which a talisman cut in crystals was attached—the graceful buckle on the left shoulder, in which was set an exquisite cameo of Psyche—the girdle of purple riband, richly wrought with threads of gold, and clasped by interlacing serpents—and lastly, the various rings fitted to every joint of the white and slender fingers. The toilette was now arranged, according to the last mode of Rome. The fair Julia regarded herself with a last gaze of complacent vanity, and reclining again upon her seat, she bade the youngest of her slaves, in a listless tone, read to her the enamored couplets of Tibullus. This lecture was still proceeding, when a female slave admitted Nydia into the presence of the lady of the place.

"Salve, Julia!" said the flower-girl, arresting her steps within a few paces from the spot where Julia sat, and crossing her arms upon her breast, "I have obeyed your commands."

"You have done well, flower-girl," answered the lady. "Approach—you may take a seat."

One of the slaves placed a stool by Julia, and Nydia seated herself.

Julia looked hard at the Thessalian for some moments in rather an embarrassed silence. She then motioned her attendants to withdraw, and to close the door. When they were alone, she said, looking mechanically from Nydia, and forgetful that she was with one who could not observe her countenance,—

"You serve the Neapolitan, Ione?"

"I am with her at present," answered Nydia.

"Is she as handsome as they say?"

"I know not," replied Nydia. "How can *I* judge?"

"Ah! I should have remembered. But thou hast ears if not eyes. Do thy fellow-slaves tell thee she is handsome? Slaves talking with one another forget to flatter even their mistress."

"They tell me that she is beautiful."

"Hem!—say they that she is tall?"

"Yes."

"Why, so am I.—Dark-haired?"

"I have heard so."

"So am I. And doth Glaucus visit her much?"

"Daily," returned Nydia, with a half-suppressed sigh.

"Daily, indeed! Does he find her handsome?"

"I should think so, since they are so soon to be wedded."

"Wedded!" cried Julia, turning pale even through the false roses on her cheek, and starting from her couch. Nydia did not, of course, perceive the emotion she had caused. Julia remained a long time silent; but her heaving breast and flashing eyes would have betrayed, to one who *could* have seen, the wound her vanity sustained.

"They tell me thou art a Thessalian," said she, at last breaking silence.

"And truly!"

"Thessaly is the land of magic and of witches, of talismans and of love-philtres," said Julia.

"It has ever been celebrated for its sorcerers," returned Nydia, timidly.

"Knowest thou, then, blind Thessalian, of any love-charms?"

"I!" said the flower-girl, coloring; "*I!* how should I? No, assuredly not!"

"The worse for thee; I could have given thee gold enough to have purchased thy freedom hadst thou been more wise."

"But what," asked Nydia, "can induce the beautiful and wealthy Julia to ask that question of her servant? Has she not money, and youth, and loveliness? Are *they* not love-charms enough to dispense with magic?"

"To all but one person in the world," answered Julia, haughtily: "but methinks thy blindness is infectious; and——but no matter."

"And that one person?" said Nydia, eagerly.

"Is *not* Glaucus," replied Julia, with the customary deceit of her sex, "Glaucus—no!"

Nydia drew her breath more freely, and after a short pause Julia recommenced.

"But talking of Glaucus, and his attachment to this Neapolitan, reminded me of the influence of love-spells, which, for aught I know or care, she may have exercised upon him. Blind girl, I love, and—shall Julia live to say it?—am loved not in return! This humbles—nay, not *humbles*—but it *stings* my pride. I would see this ingrate at my feet—not in order that I might raise, but that I might spurn, him. When they told me thou wert Thessalian, I imagined thy young mind might have learned the dark secrets of thy clime."

"Alas! no," murmured Nydia: "would it had!"

"Thanks, at least, for that kindly wish," said Julia, unconscious of what was passing in the breast of the flower-girl.

"But tell me,—thou hearest the gossip of slaves, always prone to these dim beliefs; always ready to apply to sorcery for their own low loves,—hast thou ever heard of any Eastern magician in this city, who possesses the art of which thou art ignorant? No vain chiromancer, no juggler of the market-place, but some more potent and mighty magician of India or of Egypt?"

"Of Egypt?—yes!" said Nydia, shuddering. "What Pompeian has not heard of Arbaces?"

"Arbaces! true," replied Julia, grasping at the recollection. "They say he is a man above all the petty and false impostures of dull pretenders,—that he is versed in the learning of the stars, and the secrets of the ancient Nox; why not in the mysteries of love?"

"If there be one magician living whose art is above that of others, it is that dread man," answered Nydia; and she felt her talisman while she spoke.

"He is too wealthy to divine for money?" continued Julia, sneeringly. "Can I not visit him?"

"It is an evil mansion for the young and the beautiful," replied Nydia. "I have heard, too, that he languishes in——"

"An evil mansion!" said Julia, catching only the first sentence. "Why so?"

"The orgies of his midnight leisure are impure and polluted—at least, so says rumor."

"By Ceres, by Pan, and by Cybele! thou dost but provoke my curiosity instead of exciting my fears," returned the wayward and pampered Pompeian. "I will seek and question him of his lore. If to these orgies love be admitted—why the more likely that he knows its secrets!"

Nydia did not answer.

"I will seek him this very day," resumed Julia; "nay, why not this very hour?"

"At daylight, and in his present state, thou hast assuredly the less to fear," answered Nydia, yielding to her own sudden and secret wish to learn if the dark Egyptian were indeed possessed of those spells to rivet and attract love, of which the Thessalian had so often heard.

"And who would dare insult the rich daughter of Diomed?" said Julia, haughtily. "I will go."

"May I visit thee afterwards to learn the result?" asked Nydia, anxiously.

"Kiss me for thy interest in Julia's honor," answered the lady. "Yes, assuredly. This eve we sup abroad—come hither at the same hour to-morrow, and thou shalt know all: I may have to employ thee too; but enough for the present. Stay, take this bracelet for the new thought thou hast inspired me with; remember, if thou servest Julia, she is grateful and she is generous."

"I cannot take thy present," said Nydia, putting aside the bracelet; "but, young as I am, I can sympathize unbought with those who love—and love in vain."

"Sayest thou so?" returned Julia. "Thou speakest like a free woman—and thou shalt yet be free—farewell!"

CHAPTER VIII.

JULIA SEEKS ARBACES.—THE RESULT OF THAT INTERVIEW.

Arbaces was seated in a chamber, which opened on a kind of balcony or portico, that fronted his garden. His cheek was pale and worn with the sufferings he had endured, but his iron frame had already recovered from the severest effects of that accident which had frustrated his fell designs in the moment of victory. The air that came fragrantly to his brow revived his languid senses, and the blood circulated more freely than it had done for days through his shrunken veins.

"So, then," thought he, "the storm of fate has broken and blown over,—the evil which my lore predicted, threatening life itself, has chanced—and yet I live! It came as the stars foretold; and now the long, bright, and prosperous career which was to succeed that evil, if I survived it, smiles beyond: I have passed—I have subdued the latest danger of my destiny. Now I have but to lay out the gardens of my future fate—unterrified and secure. First, then, of all my pleasures, even before that of love, shall come revenge! This boy Greek—who has crossed my passion—thwarted my designs—baffled me even when the blade was about to drink his accursed blood—shall not a second time escape me! But for the method of my vengeance? Of that let me ponder well! Oh! Até, if thou art indeed a goddess, fill me with thy direst inspiration!" The Egyptian sank into an intent revery, which did not seem to present to him any clear or satisfactory suggestions. He changed his position restlessly, as he revolved scheme after scheme, which no sooner occurred than it was dismissed; several times he struck his breast and groaned aloud, with the desire of vengeance, and a sense of his impotence to accomplish it. While thus absorbed, a boy slave timidly entered the chamber.

A female, evidently of rank, from her dress and that of the single slave who attended her, waited below and sought an audience with Arbaces.

"A female!" his heart beat quick. "Is she young?"

"Her face is concealed by her veil; but her form is slight, yet round, as that of youth."

"Admit her," said the Egyptian; for a moment his vain heart dreamed the stranger might be Ione.

The first glance of the visitor now entering the apartment sufficed to undeceive so erring a fancy. True, she was about the same height as Ione, and perhaps the same age—true, she was finely and richly formed—but where was that undulating and ineffable grace which accompanied every motion of the peerless Neapolitan—the chaste and decorous garb, so simple even in the care of its arrangement—the dignified, yet bashful step—the majesty of womanhood and its modesty?

"Pardon me that I rise with pain," said Arbaces, gazing on the stranger; "I am still suffering from recent illness."

"Do not disturb thyself, O great Egyptian!" returned Julia, seeking to disguise

the fear she already experienced beneath the ready resort of flattery; "and forgive an unfortunate female who seeks consolation from thy wisdom."

"Draw near, fair stranger," said Arbaces; "and speak without apprehension or reserve."

Julia placed herself on a seat beside the Egyptian, and wonderingly gazed around an apartment whose elaborate and costly luxuries shamed even the ornate enrichment of her father's mansion; fearfully, too, she regarded the hieroglyphical inscriptions on the walls—the faces of the mysterious images, which at every corner gazed upon her—the tripod at a little distance—and, above all, the grave and remarkable countenance of Arbaces himself; a long white robe, like a veil, half covered his raven locks, and flowed to his feet; his face was made even more impressive by its present paleness; and his dark and penetrating eyes seemed to pierce the shelter of her veil, and explore the secrets of her vain and unfeminine soul.

"And what," said his low, deep voice, "brings thee, O maiden! to the house of the Eastern stranger?"

"His fame," replied Julia.

"In what?" said he, with a strange and slight smile.

"Canst thou ask, O wise Arbaces? is not thy knowledge the very gossip theme of Pompeii?"

"Some little lore have I, indeed, treasured up," replied Arbaces; "but in what can such serious and sterile secrets benefit the ear of beauty?"

"Alas!" said Julia, a little cheered by the accustomed accents of adulation; "does not sorrow fly to wisdom for relief, and they who love unrequitedly, are not they the chosen victims of grief?"

"Ha!" said Arbaces, "can unrequited love be the lot of so fair a form, whose modelled proportions are visible even beneath the folds of thy graceful robe? Deign, O maiden! to lift thy veil, that I may see at least if the face correspond in loveliness with the form."

Not unwilling, perhaps, to exhibit her charms, and thinking they were likely to interest the magician in her fate, Julia, after some slight hesitation, raised her veil, and revealed a beauty which, but for art, had been indeed attractive to the fixed gaze of the Egyptian.

"Thou comest to me for advice in unhappy love," said he; "well, turn that face on the ungrateful one: what other love-charm can I give thee?"

"Oh, cease these courtesies!" said Julia; "it *is* a love-charm, indeed, that I would ask from thy skill."

"Fair stranger!" replied Arbaces, somewhat scornfully, "love-spells are not among the secrets I have wasted the midnight oil to attain."

"Is it indeed so? Then pardon me, great Arbaces, and farewell!"

"Stay," said Arbaces, who, despite his passion for Ione, was not unmoved by the beauty of his visitor; and had he been in the flush of a more assured health, might have attempted to console the fair Julia by other means than those of supernatural wisdom,—

"Stay; although I confess that I have left the witchery of philtres and potions to those whose trade is in such knowledge, yet am I myself not so dull to beauty but that in earlier youth I may have employed them in my own behalf. I may give thee advice, at least, if thou wilt be candid with me. Tell me then, first, art thou unmarried, as thy dress betokens?"

"Yes," said Julia.

"And, being unblest with fortune, wouldst thou allure some wealthy suitor?"

"I am richer than he who disdains me."

"Strange and more strange! And thou lovest him who loves not thee?"

"I know not if I love him," answered Julia, haughtily; "but I know that I would see myself triumph over a rival—I would see him who rejected me my suitor—I would see her whom he has preferred in her turn despised!"

"A natural ambition and a womanly," said the Egyptian, in a tone too grave for irony. "Yet more, fair maiden; wilt thou confide to me the name of thy lover? Can he be Pompeian, and despise wealth, even if blind to beauty?"

"He is of Athens," answered Julia, looking down.

"Ha!" cried the Egyptian, impetuously,

as the blood rushed to his cheek; "there is but one Athenian, young and noble, in Pompeii. Can it be Glaucus of whom thou speakest?"

"Ah! betray me not—so indeed they call him."

The Egyptian sank back, gazing vacantly on the averted face of the merchant's daughter, and muttering inly to himself:—this conference, with which he had hitherto only trifled, amusing himself with the credulity and vanity of his visitor—might it not minister to his revenge?

"I see thou canst assist me not," said Julia, offended by his continued silence; "guard at least my secret. Once more, farewell!"

"Maiden," said the Egyptian, in an earnest and serious tone, "thy suit hath touched me—I will minister to thy will. Listen to me; I have not myself dabbled in these lesser mysteries, but I know one who hath. At the base of Vesuvius, less than a league from the city, there dwells a powerful witch; beneath the rank dews of the new moon, she has gathered the herbs which possess the virtue to chain Love in eternal fetters. Her art can bring thy lover to thy feet. Seek her, and mention to her the name of Arbaces; she fears that name, and will give thee her most potent philtres."

"Alas!" answered Julia, "I know not the road to the home of her whom thou speakest of: the way, short though it be, is long to traverse for a girl who leaves, unknown, the house of her father. The country is entangled with wild vines, and dangerous with precipitous caverns. I dare not trust to mere strangers to guide me: the reputation of women of my rank is easily tarnished—and though I care not who knows that I love Glaucus, I would not have it imagined that I obtained his love by a spell."

"Were I but three days advanced in health," said the Egyptian, rising and walking (as if to try his strength) across the chamber, but with irregular and feeble steps, "I myself would accompany thee.—Well, thou must wait."

"But Glaucus is soon to wed that hated Neapolitan."

"Wed!"

"Yes; in the early part of next month."

"So soon! Art thou well advised of this?"

"From the lips of her own slave."

"It shall not be!" said the Egyptian, impetuously. "Fear nothing, Glaucus shall be thine. Yet how, when thou obtainest it, canst thou administer to him this potion?"

"My father has invited him, and, I believe, the Neapolitan also, to a banquet, on the day following to-morrow; I shall then have the opportunity to administer it."

"So be it!" said the Egyptian, with eyes flashing such fierce joy, that Julia's gaze sank trembling beneath them. "To-morrow eve, then, order thy litter:—thou hast one at thy command?"

"Surely—yes," returned the purse-proud Julia.

"Order thy litter—at two miles' distance from the city is a house of entertainment, frequented by the wealthier Pompeians, from the excellence of its baths, and the beauty of its gardens. There canst thou pretend only to shape thy course—there, ill or dying, I will meet thee by the statue of Silenus, in the copse that skirts the garden; and I, myself, will guide thee to the witch. Let us wait till, with the evening star, the goats of the herdsmen are gone to rest; when the dark twilight conceals us, and none shall cross our steps. Go home, and fear not. By Hades, swears Arbaces, the sorcerer of Egypt, that Ione shall never wed with Glaucus!"

"And that Glaucus shall be mine?" added Julia, filling up the incompleted sentence.

"Thou hast said it!" replied Arbaces; and Julia, half frightened at this unhallowed appointment, but urged on by jealousy and the pique of rivalship, even more than love, resolved to fulfil it.

Left alone, Arbaces burst forth,—

"Bright stars that never lie, ye already begin the execution of your promises—success in love, and victory over foes, for the rest of my smooth existence. In the very hour when my mind could devise no clue to the goal of vengeance, have ye sent this fair fool for my guide?" He paused in deep thought. "Yes," said he again, but in a calmer voice; "I could not myself have

given to her the poison that shall be indeed a philtre !—his death might be thus tracked to my door. But the witch—ay, *there* is the spit, the natural agent of my designs ! "

He summoned one of his slaves, bade him hasten to track the steps of Julia, and acquaint himself with her name and condition. This done, he stepped forth into the portico. The skies were serene and clear; but he, keeply read in the signs of their various change, beheld in one mass of cloud, far on the horizon, which the wind began slowly to agitate, that a storm was brooding above.

" It is like my vengeance," said he, as he gazed; "the sky is clear, but the cloud moves on."

CHAPTER IX.

A STORM IN THE SOUTH.—THE WITCH'S CAVERN.

It was when the heats of noon died gradually away from the earth, that Glaucus and Ione went forth to enjoy the cooled and grateful air. At that time, various carriages were in use among the Romans ; the one most used by the richer citizens, when they required no companion in their excursions, was the *biga*, already described in the early portion of this work; that appropriated to the matrons was termed *carpentum*,* which had commonly two wheels; the ancients used also a sort of litter, a vast sedan chair, more commodiously arranged than the modern, inasmuch as the occupant thereof could lie down at ease, instead of being perpendicularly and stiffly jostled up and down.† There was another carriage, used both for travelling and for excursions in the country; it was commodious, containing three or four persons with ease, having a covering which could be raised at pleasure; and, in short, answering very much the purpose of (though very different in shape from) the modern britska. It was a vehicle of this description that the lovers, accompanied by one female slave of Ione, now used in their excursion. About ten miles from the city, there was at that day an old ruin, the remains of a temple, evidently Grecian; and as for Glaucus and Ione every thing Grecian possessed an interest, they had agreed to visit these ruins: it was thither they were now bound.

Their road lay among vines and olive groves; till, winding more and more towards the higher ground of Vesuvius, the path grew rugged; the mules moved slowly, and with labor; and at every opening in the wood they beheld those gray and horrent caverns indenting the parched rock, which Strabo has described; but which the various revolutions of time and the volcano have removed from the present aspect of the mountain. The sun, sloping towards his descent, cast long and deep shadows over the mountain; here and there they still heard the rustic reed of the shepherd amongst copses of the beechwood and wild oak. Sometimes they marked the form of the silk-haired and graceful capella, with its wreathing horn and bright gray eye—which, still beneath Ausonian skies, recalls the eclogues of Maro, browsing half-way up the hills; and the grapes, already purple with the smiles of the deepening summer, glowed out from the arched festoons, which hung pendent from tree to tree. Above them, light clouds floated in the serene heavens, sweeping so slowly athwart the firmament, that they scarcely seemed to stir; while, on their right they caught, ever and anon, glimpses of the waveless sea, with some light bark skimming its surface; and the sunlight breaking over the deep in those countless and softest hues so peculiar to that delicious sea.

" How beautiful ! " said Glaucus, in a half-whispered tone, " is that expression by which we call Earth our Mother? With what a kindly equal love she pours her blessings upon her children ! and even to those sterile spots to which Nature has denied beauty, she yet contrives to dispense her smiles: witness the arbutus and the vine, which she wreathes over the arid and burning soil of yon extinct volcano. Ah ! in such an hour and scene as this, well

* For public festivals and games they used one more luxurious and costly, called *pilentum*, with four wheels.

† But they had also the *selia*, or sedan, in which they sat as we do.

might we imagine that the laughing face of the Faun should peep forth from those green festoons; or, that we might trace the steps of the Mountain Nymph through the thickest mazes of the glade. But the Nymphs ceased, beautiful Ione, when *thou* wert created!"

There is no tongue that flatters like a lover's; and yet, in the exaggeration of his feelings, flattery seems to him commonplace. Strange and prodigal exuberance, which soon exhausts itself by overflowing!

They arrived at the ruins: they examined them with that fondness with which we trace the hallowed and household vestiges of our own ancestry—they lingered there till Hesperus appeared in the rosy heavens; and then returning homeward in the twilight, they were more silent than they had been; for in the shadow and beneath the stars they felt more oppressively their mutual love.

It was at this time that the storm which the Egyptian had predicted began to creep visibly over them. At first, a low and distant thunder gave warning of the approaching conflict of the elements; and then rapidly rushed above the dark ranks of the serried clouds. The suddenness of storms in that climate is something almost preternatural, and might well suggest to early superstition the notion of a divine agency—a few large drops broke heavily among the boughs that half overhung their path, and then, swift and intolerably bright, the forked lightning darted across their very eyes, and was swallowed up by the increasing darkness.

"Swifter, good carrucarius!" cried Glaucus to the driver; "the tempest comes on apace."

The slave urged on the mules—they went swift over the uneven and stony road—the clouds thickened, near and more near broke the thunder, and fast rushed the dashing rain.

"Dost thou fear?" whispered Glaucus, as he sought excuse in the storm to come nearer to Ione.

"Not with thee," said she, softly.

At that instant, the carriage—fragile and ill-contrived (as, despite their graceful shapes, were, for practical uses, most of such inventions at that time,)—struck violently into a deep rut, over which lay a log of fallen wood; the driver, with a curse, stimulated his mules yet faster for the obstacle, the wheel was torn from the socket, and the carriage suddenly overset.

Glaucus quickly extricating himself from the vehicle, hastened to assist Ione, who was fortunately unhurt; with some difficulty they raised the carruca (or carriage), and found that it ceased any longer even to afford them shelter; the springs that fastened the covering were snapped asunder, and the rain poured fast and fiercely into the interior.

In this dilemma, what was to be done? They were yet some distance from the city—no house, no aid, seemed near.

"There is," said the slave, "a smith about a mile off; I could seek him, and he might fasten at least the wheel to the carruca—but, Jupiter! how the rain beats! my mistress will be wet before I come back."

"Run thither at least," said Glaucus; "we must find the best shelter we can till you return."

The lane was overshadowed with trees, beneath the amplest of which Glaucus drew Ione. He endeavored, by stripping his own cloak, to shield her yet more from the rapid rain; but it descended with a fury that broke through all puny obstacles; and suddenly, while Glaucus was yet whispering courage to his beautiful charge, the lightning struck one of the trees immediately before them, and split with a mighty crash its huge trunk in twain. This awful incident apprised them of the danger they braved in their present shelter, and Glaucus looked anxiously round for some less perilous place of refuge. "We are now," said he, "half-way up the ascent of Vesuvius; there ought to be some cavern or hollow in the vine-clad rocks, could we but find it, in which the deserting Nymphs have left a shelter." While thus saying he moved from the trees, and looking wistfully towards the mountain, discovered through the advancing gloom, a red and tremulous light at no considerable distance. "That must come," said he, "from the hearth of some shepherd or vine-dresser—it will guide us to some hospitable retreat. Wilt thou stay here, while I—yet no—that would be to leave thee to danger."

"I will go with you cheerfully," said Ione. "Open as the space seems, it is bet-

ter than the treacherous shelter of these boughs."

Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus, accompanied by the trembling female slave, advanced towards the light which yet burnt red and steadfastly. At length the space was no longer open; wild vines entangled their steps, and hid from them, save by imperfect intervals, the guiding beam. But faster and fiercer came the rain, and the lightning assumed its most deadly and blasting form; they were still, therefore, impelled onward, hoping at last, if the light eluded them, to arrive at some cottage, or some friendly cavern. The vines grew more and more intricate—the light was entirely snatched from them; but a narrow path, which they trod with labor and pain, guided only by the constant and long-lingering flashes of the storm, continued to lead them towards its direction. The rain ceased suddenly; precipitous and rough crags of scorched lava frowned before them, rendered more fearful by the lightning that illumined the dark and dangerous soil. Sometimes the blaze lingered over the iron-gray heaps of scoria, covered in part with ancient mosses or stunted trees, as if seeking in vain for some gentler product of earth, more worthy of its ire; and sometimes leaving the whole of that part of the scene in darkness, the lightning, broad and sheeted, hung redly over the ocean, tossing far below, until its waves seemed glowing into fire; and so intense was the blaze, that it brought vividly into view even the sharp outline of the more distant windings of the bay, from the eternal Misenum, with its lofty brow, to the beautiful Sorrentum and the giant hills behind.

Our lovers stopped in perplexity and doubt, when suddenly, as the darkness that gloomed between the fierce flashes of lightning once more wrapped them round, they saw near, but high, before them, the mysterious light. Another blaze, in which heaven and earth were reddened, made visible to them the whole expanse; no house was near, but just where they had beheld the light, they thought they saw in the recess of a cavern the outline of a human form. The darkness once more returned; the light, no longer paled beneath the fires of heaven, burned forth again: they resolved to ascend towards it; they had to wind their way among vast fragments of stone, here and there overhung with wild bushes; but they gained nearer and nearer to the light, and at length they stood opposite the mouth of a kind of cavern, apparently formed by huge splinters of rock that had fallen transversely athwart each other; and, looking into the gloom, each drew back involuntarily with a superstitious fear and chill.

A fire burned in the far recess of the cave; and over it was a small caldron; on a tall and thin column of iron stood a rude lamp; over that part of the wall at the base of which burned the fire, hung in many rows, as if to dry, a profusion of herbs and weeds. A fox, couched before the fire, gazed upon the strangers with its bright and red eye—its hair bristling—and a low growl stealing from between its teeth; in the centre of the cave was an earthen statue, which had three heads of a singular and fantastic cast; they were formed by the real skulls of a dog, a horse, and a boar; a low tripod stood before this wild representation of the popular Hecate.

But it was not these appendages and appliances of the cave that thrilled the blood of those who gazed fearfully therein —it was the face of its inmate. Before the fire, with the light shining full upon her features, sat a woman of considerable age. Perhaps in no country are there seen so many hags as in Italy—in no country does beauty so awfully change, in age, to hideousness the most appalling and revolting. But the old woman now before them was not one of these specimens of the extreme of human ugliness; on the contrary, her countenance betrayed the remains of a regular but high and aquiline order of feature; with stony eyes turned upon them—with a look that met and fascinated theirs—they beheld in that fearful countenance the very image of a corpse !—the same, the glazed and lustreless regard, the blue and shrunken lips, the drawn and hollow jaw—the dead, lank hair, of a pale gray—the livid, green, ghastly skin, which seemed all surely tinged and tainted by the grave !

"It is a dead thing !" said Glaucus.

"Nay—it stirs—it is a ghost or *larva*," faltered Ione, as she clung to the Athenian's breast.

"Oh, away—away!" groaned the slave; "it is the Witch of Vesuvius!"

"Who are ye?" said a hollow and ghostly voice. "And what do ye here?"

The sound, terrible and deathlike as it was—suiting well the countenance of the speaker, and seeming rather the voice of some bodiless wanderer of the Styx than living mortal, would have made Ione shrink back into the pitiless fury of the storm, but Glaucus, though not without some misgiving, drew her into the cavern.

"We are storm-beaten wanderers from the neighboring city," said he, "and decoyed hither by yon light; we crave shelter and the comfort of your hearth."

As he spoke, the fox rose from the ground and advanced towards the strangers, showing from end to end its white teeth, and deepening in its menacing growl.

"Down, slave!" said the witch; and at the sound of her voice the beast dropped at once, covering its face with its brush, and keeping only its quick, vigilant eye, fixed upon the invaders of its repose. "Come to the fire, if ye will!" said she, turning to Glaucus and his companions. "I never welcome living thing—save the owl, the fox, the toad, and the viper—so I cannot welcome ye; but come to the fire without welcome—why stand upon form?"

The language in which the hag addressed them was a strange and barbarous Latin, interlarded with many words of some more rude and ancient dialect. She did not stir from her seat, but gazed stonily upon them as Glaucus now released Ione of her outer wrapping garments, and making her place herself on a log of wood, which was the only other seat he perceived at hand—fanned with his breath the embers into a more glowing flame. The slave, encouraged by the boldness of her superiors, divested herself also of her long *palla*, and crept timorously to the opposite corner of the hearth.

"We disturb you, I fear," said the silver voice of Ione in conciliation.

The witch did not reply—she seemed like one who has awakened for a moment from the dead, and has then relapsed once more into the eternal slumber.

"Tell me," said she, suddenly, and after a long pause, "are ye brother and sister?"

"No," said Ione, blushing.

"Are ye married?"

"Not so," replied Glaucus.

"Ho, lovers!—ha!—ha!—ha!" and the witch laughed so loud and so long that the caverns rang again.

The heart of Ione stood still at that strange mirth. Glaucus muttered a rapid counterspell to the omen—and the slave turned as pale as the cheek of the witch herself.

"Why dost thou laugh, old crone?" said Glaucus, somewhat sternly, as he concluded his invocation.

"Did I laugh?" said the hag, absently.

"She is in her dotage," whispered Glaucus: as he said this, he caught the eye of the hag fixed upon him with a malignant and vivid glare.

"Thou liest!" said she, abruptly.

"Thou art an uncourteous welcomer," returned Glaucus.

"Hush! provoke her not, dear Glaucus!" whispered Ione.

"I will tell thee why I laughed when I discovered ye were lovers," said the old woman. "It was because it is a pleasure to the old and withered to look upon young hearts like yours—and to know the time will come when ye will loathe each other—loathe—loathe—ha!—ha!—ha!"

It was now Ione's turn to pray against the unpleasing prophecy.

"The gods forbid!" said she. "Yet, poor woman, thou knowest little of love, or thou wouldst know that it never changes."

"Was I young once, think ye?" returned the hag, quickly; "and am I old, and hideous, and deathly now? Such as is the form, so is the heart." With these words she sank again into a stillness profound and fearful, as if the cessation of life itself.

"Hast thou dwelt here long!" said Glaucus, after a pause, feeling uncomfortably oppressed beneath a silence so appalling.

"Ah, long!—yes."

"It is but a drear abode."

"Ha! thou mayst well say that—Hell is beneath us!" replied the hag, pointing her bony finger to the earth. "And I will tell thee a secret—the dim things below are preparing wrath for ye above—you, the young, and the thoughtless, and the beautiful."

"Thou utterest but evil words, ill becoming the hospitable," said Glaucus; "and in future I will brave the tempest rather than thy welcome."

"Thou wilt do well. None should ever seek me—save the wretched!"

"And why the wretched?" asked the Athenian.

"I am the witch of the mountain," replied the sorceress, with a ghastly grin; "my trade is to give hope to the hopeless; for the crossed in love I have philtres; for the avaricious, promises of treasure; for the malicious, potions of revenge; for the happy and the good, I have only what life has—curses! Trouble me no more!"

With this the grim tenant of the cave relapsed into a silence so obstinate and sullen, that Glaucus in vain endeavored to draw her into farther conversation. She did not evince, by any alteration of her locked and rigid features that she even heard him. Fortunately, however, the storm, which was brief as violent, began now to relax; the rain grew less and less fierce; and at last, as the clouds parted, the moon burst forth in the purple opening of heaven, and streamed clear and full into that desolate abode. Never had she shone, perhaps, on a group more worthy of the painter's art. The young, the all-beautiful Ione, seated by that rude fire—her lover, already forgetful of the presence of the hag, at her feet, gazing upward to her face, and whispering sweet words—the pale and affrighted slave at a little distance—and the ghastly hag resting her deadly eyes upon them; yet seemingly serene and fearless (for the companionship of love hath such power) were these beautiful beings, things of another sphere, in that dark and unholy cavern, with its gloomy quaintness of appurtenance. The fox regarded them from his corner with his keen and fiery eye; and as Glaucus now turned towards the witch, he perceived for the first time, just under her seat, the bright gaze and crested head of a large snake; whether it was that the vivid coloring of the Athenian's cloak, thrown over the shoulders of Ione, attracted the reptile's anger—its crest began to glow and rise, as if menacing and preparing itself to spring upon the Neapolitan;—Glaucus caught quickly at one of the half-burned logs upon the hearth—and, as if enraged at the action, the snake came forth from its shelter, and with a loud hiss raised itself on end till its height nearly approached that of the Greek.

"Witch!" cried Glaucus, "command thy creature, or thou wilt see it dead."

"It has been despoiled of its venom!" said the witch, aroused at his threat; but ere the words had left her lip, the snake had sprung upon Glaucus: quick and watchful, the agile Greek leaped lightly aside, and struck so fell and dexterous a blow on the head of the snake, that it fell prostrate and writhing among the embers of the fire.

The hag sprung up, and stood confronting Glaucus with a face which would have befitted the fiercest of the Furies, so utterly dire and wrathful was its expression—yet even in horror and ghastliness preserving the outline and trace of beauty—and utterly free from that coarse grotesque at which the imaginations of the North have sought the source of terror.

"Thou hast," said she, in a slow and steady voice—which belied the expression of her face, so much was it passionless and calm—"thou hast had shelter under my roof, and warmth at my hearth; thou hast returned evil for good; thou hast smitten and haply slain the thing that loved me and was mine: nay, more, the creature, above all others, consecrated to gods and deemed venerable by man *—now hear thy punishment. By the moon, who is the guardian of the sorceress—by Orcus, who is the treasurer of wrath—I curse thee! and thou art cursed! May thy love be blasted—may thy name be blackened—may the infernals mark thee—may thy heart wither and scorch—may thy last hour recall to thee the prophet voice of the Saga of Vesuvius! And thou—" she added, turning sharply towards Ione, and raising her right arm, when Glaucus burst impetuously on her speech;—

"Hag!" cried he, "forbear! Me thou hast cursed, and I commit myself to the gods—I defy and scorn thee! but breathe but one word against yon maiden, and I will con-

* A peculiar sanctity was attached by the Romans (as, indeed, by perhaps every ancient people) to serpents, which they kept tame in their houses, and often introduced at their meals.

vert the oath on thy foul lips to thy dying groan. Beware!"

"I have done," replied the hag, laughing wildly; "for in thy doom is she who loves thee accursed. And not the less, that I heard *her* lips breathe thy name, and know by what word to commend thee to the demons. *Glaucus*—thou art doomed!" So saying, the witch turned from the Athenian, and, kneeling down beside her wounded favorite, which she dragged from the hearth, she turned to them her face no more.

"O Glaucus!" said Ione, greatly terrified, "what have we done?—Let us hasten from this place; the storm has ceased. Good mistress, forgive him—recall thy words—he meant but to defend himself—accept this peace-offering to unsay the said:" and Ione, stooping, placed her purse on the hag's lap.

"Away!" said she, bitterly—"away! The oath once woven the fates only can untie. Away!"

"Come, dearest!" said Glaucus, impatiently. "Thinkest thou that the gods above us or below hear the impotent ravings of dotage? Come!"

Long and loud rang the echoes of the cavern with the dread laugh of the saga—she deigned no further reply.

The lovers breathed more freely when they gained the open air: yet the scene they had witnessed, the words and the laughter of the witch, still fearfully dwelt with Ione; and even Glaucus could not thoroughly shake off the impression they bequeathed. The storm had subsided—save, now and then, a low thunder muttered at the distance amidst the darker clouds, or a momentary flash of lightning affronted the sovereignty of the moon. With some difficulty they regained the road, where they found the vehicle already sufficiently repaired for their departure, and the carrucarius calling loudly upon Hercules to tell him where his charge had vanished.

Glaucus vainly endeavored to cheer the exhausted spirits of Ione; and scarce less vainly to recover the elastic tone of his own natural gaiety. They soon arrived before the gate of the city: as it opened to them, a litter borne by slaves impeded the way.

"It is too late for egress," cried the sentinel to the inmate of the litter.

"Not so," said a voice, which the lovers started to hear; it was a voice they well recognized. "I am bound to the villa of Marcus Polybius. I shall return shortly. I am Arbaces the Egyptian."

The scruples of him at the gate were removed, and the litter passed close beside the carriage that bore the lovers.

"Arbaces, at this hour!—scarce recovered too, methinks!—Whither and for what can he leave the city?" said Glaucus.

"Alas!" replied Ione, bursting into tears, "my soul feels still more and more the omen of evil. Preserve us, O ye gods! or at least," she murmered inly, "preserve my Glaucus!"

CHAPTER X.

LORD OF THE BURNING BELT AND HIS MINION.—FATE WRITES HER PROPHECY IN RED LETTERS, BUT WHO SHALL READ THEM?

ARBACES had tarried only till the cessation of the tempest allowed him, under cover of night, to seek the Saga of Vesuvius. Borne by those of his trustier slaves in whom in all more secret expiditions he was accustomed to confide, he lay extended along his litter, and resigning his sanguine heart to the contemplation of vengeance gratified and love possessed. The slaves in so short a journey moved very little slower than the ordinary pace of mules; and Arbaces soon arrived at the commencement of a narrow path, which the lovers had not been fortunate enough to discover; but which, skirting the thick vines, led at once to the habitation of the witch. Here he rested the litter; and bidding his slaves conceal themselves and the vehicle among the vines from the observation of any chance passenger, he mounted alone, with steps still feeble but supported by a long staff, the drear and sharp ascent.

Not a drop of rain fell from the tranquil heaven: but the moisture dripped mournfully from the laden boughs of the vine, and now and then collected in tiny pools in the crevices and hollows of the rocky way.

"Strange passions these for a philosopher," though Arbaces, "that lead one like me just new from the bed of death, and lapped even

in health amidst the roses of luxury, across such nocturnal paths as this; but Passion and Vengeance treading to their goal can make an Elysium of a Tartarus." High, clear, and melancholy shone the moon above the road of that dark wayfarer, glassing herself in every pool that lay before him, and sleeping in shadow along the sloping mount. He saw before him the same light that had guided the steps of his intended victims, but, no longer contrasted by the blackened clouds, it shone less redly clear.

He paused, as at length he approached the mouth of the cavern, to recover breath; and then, with his wonted collected and stately mien, he crossed the unhallowed threshold.

The fox sprang up at the ingress of this newcomer, and by a long howl announced another visitor to his mistress.

The witch had resumed her seat, and her aspect of gravelike and grim repose. By her feet, upon a bed of dry weeds which half covered it, lay the wounded snake; but the quick eye of the Egyptian caught its scales glittering in the reflected light of the opposite fire, as it writhed,—now contracting, now lengthening its folds, in pain and unsated anger.

"Down, slave!" said the witch, as before, to the fox; and, as before, the animal dropped to the ground—mute, but vigilant.

"Rise, servant of Nox and Erebus!" said Arabes, commandingly; "a superior in thine art salutes thee! rise, and welcome him."

At these words the hag turned her gaze upon the Egyptian's towering form and dark features. She looked long and fixedly upon him, as he stood before her in his Oriental robe, and folded arms, and steadfast and haughty brow. "Who art thou," she said at last, "that callest thyself greater in art than the Saga of the Burning Fields, and the daughter of the perished Etrurian race?"

"I am he," answered Arbaces, "from whom all cultivators of magic, from north to south, from east to west, from the Ganges and the Nile to the vales of Thessaly and the shores of the yellow Tiber, have stooped to learn."

"There is but one such man in these places," answered the witch, "whom the men of the outer world, unknowing his loftier attributes and more secret fame, call Arbaces the Egyptian: to us of a higher nature and deeper knowledge, his rightful appellation is Hermes of the Burning Girdle."

"Look again," returned Arbaces: "I am he."

As he spoke, he drew aside his robe, and revealed a cincture seemingly of fire, that burned around his waist, clasped in the centre by a plate whereon was engraven some sign apparently vague and unintelligible, but which was evidently not unknown to the Saga. She rose hastily, and threw herself at the feet of Arbaces. "I have seen, then," said she, in a voice of deep humility, "the Lord of the Mighty Girdle—vouchsafe my homage."

"Rise," said the Egyptian; "I have need of thee."

So saying, he placed himself on the same log of wood on which Ione had rested before, and motioned to the witch to resume her seat.

"Thou sayest," said he, as she obeyed, "that thou art a daughter of the ancient Etrurian * tribes; the mighty walls of whose rock-built cities yet frown above the robber race that hath seized upon their ancient reign. Partly came those tribes from Greece, partly were they exiles from a more burning and primeval soil. In either case art thou of Egyptian lineage, for the Grecian masters of the aboriginal helot were among the restless sons whom the Nile banished from her bosom. Equally, then, O Saga! thy descent is from ancestors that swore allegiance to mine own. By birth as by knowledge art thou the subject of Arbaces. Hear me, then, and obey!"

The witch bowed her head.

"Whatever art we possess in sorcery," continued Arbaces, "we are sometimes driven to natural means to attain our object. The ring† and the crystal,‡ and the ashes§ and the herbs,‖ do not give unerring divinations; neither do the higher mysteries of the

* The Etrurians (it may be superfluous to mention) were celebrated for their enchantments. Arbaces is wrong in assuming their Egyptian origin, but the Egyptians arrogated the ancestry of almost every one of the more illustrious races; and there are not wanting modern schoolmen who, too credulously, support the claim.

† Δακτυλομαντεία. ‡ Κρυστολομαντεία.
§ Τεφρομαντεία. ‖ Βοτανομαντεία.

moon yield even the possessor of the girdle a dispensation from the necessity of employing ever and anon human measures for a human object. Mark me, then: thou art deeply skilled, methinks, in the secrets of the more deadly herbs; thou knowest those which arrest life, which burn and scorch the soul from out her citadel, or freeze the channels of young blood into that ice which no sun can melt. Do I overrate thy skill? Speak, and truly!"

"Mighty Hermes, such lore is, indeed, mine own. Deign to look at these ghostly and corpse-like features; they have waned from the hues of life, merely by watching over the rank herbs which simmer night and day in yon caldron."

The Egyptian moved his seat from so unblessed or so unhealthful a vicinity as the witch spoke.

"It is well," said he; "thou hast learned that maxim of all the deeper knowledge which saith, 'Despise the body to make wise the mind.' But to thy task. There cometh to thee by to-morrow's starlight a vain maiden, seeking of thine art a love-charm to fascinate from another the eyes that should utter but soft tales to her own; instead of thy philtres, give the maiden one of thy most powerful poisons. Let the lover breathe his vows to the Shades."

The witch trembled from head to foot.

"Oh pardon! pardon! dread master," said she, falteringly: "but this I dare not. The law in these cities is sharp and vigilant; they will seize, they will slay me."

"For what purpose, then, thy herbs and thy potions, vain Saga?" said Arbaces, sneeringly.

The witch hid her loathsome face with her hands.

"Oh! years ago," said she, in a voice unlike her usual tones, so plaintive was it, and so soft, "I was not the thing that I am now,—I loved, I fancied myself beloved."

"And what connection hath thy love, witch, with my commands!" said Arbaces, impetuously.

"Patience," resumed the witch; "patience, I implore. I loved! another and less fair than I—yes, by Nemesis! less fair—allured from me my chosen. I was of that dark Etrurian tribe to whom most of all were known the secrets of the gloomier magic. My mother was herself a saga: she shared the resentment of her child; from her hands I received the potion that was to restore me his love; and from her, also, the poison that was to destroy my rival. Oh, crush me, dread walls! my trembling hands mistook the phials, my lover fell indeed at my feet; but dead! dead! Since then, what has been life to me? I became suddenly old, I devoted myself to the sorceries of my race; still by an irresistible impulse I curse myself with an awful penance; still I seek the most noxious herbs; still I concoct the poisons; still I imagine that I am to give them to my hated rival; still I pour them into the phial; still I fancy that they shall blast her beauty to the dust; still I wake and see the quivering body, the foaming lips, the glazing eyes of my Aulus—murdered, and by me!"

The skeleton frame of the witch shook beneath strong convulsions.

Arbaces gazed upon her with a curious though contemptuous eye.

"And this foul thing has yet human emotions!" thought he; "she still cowers over the ashes of the same fire that consumes Arbaces!—Such are we all! Mystic is the tie of those mortal passions that unite the greatest and the least."

He did not reply till she had somewhat recovered herself, and now sat rocking to and fro in her seat, with glassy eyes, fixed on the opposite flame, and large tears rolling down her livid cheeks.

"A grievous tale is thine, in truth," said Arbaces. "But these emotions are fit only for our youth—age should harden our hearts to all things but ourselves; as every year adds a scale to the shell-fish, so should each year wall and incrust the heart. Think of those frenzies no more! And now, listen to me again! By the revenge that was dear to thee, I command thee to obey me! it is for vengeance that I seek thee! This youth whom I would sweep from my path has crossed me, despite my spells;—this thing of purple and broidery, of smiles and glances, soulless and mindless, with no charm but that of beauty—accursed be it!—this insect—this Glaucus—I tell thee, by Orcus and by Nemesis, he must die!"

And working himself up at every word, the

Egyptian, forgetful of his debility—of his strange companion—of every thing but his own vindictive rage, strode, with large and rapid steps, the gloomy cavern.

"Glaucus! saidst thou, mighty master?" said the witch, abruptly; and her dim eye glared at the name with all that fierce resentment at the memory of small affronts so common amongst the solitary and the shunned.

"Ay, so he is called; but what matters the name? Let it not be heard as that of a living man, three days from this date!"

"Hear me!" said the witch, breaking from a short reverie into which she was plunged after this last sentence of the Egyptian. "Hear me! I am thy thing and thy slave! spare me! If I give to the maiden thou speakest of that which would destroy the life of Glaucus, I shall be surely detected—the dead ever find avengers. Nay, dread man! if thy visit to me be tracked, if thy hatred to Glaucus be known, thou mayest have need of thy archest magic to protect thyself!"

"Ha!" said Arbaces, stopping suddenly short; and as a proof of that blindness with which passion darkens the eyes even of the most acute, this was the first time when the risk that he himself ran by this method of vengeance had occurred to a mind ordinarily wary and circumspect.

"But," continued the witch, "if instead of that which shall arrest the heart, I give that which shall sear and blast the brain—which shall make him who quaffs it unfit for the uses and career of life—an abject, raving, benighted thing—smiting sense to drivelling, youth to dotage—will not thy vengeance be equally sated—thy object equally attained?"

"Oh, witch! no longer the servant, but the sister—the equal of Arbaces—how much brighter is woman's wit, even in vengeance, than ours! how much more exquisite than death is such a doom!"

"And," continued the hag, gloating over her fell scheme, "in this is but little danger: for by ten thousand methods, which men forbear to seek, can our victim become mad. He may have been among the vines and seen a nymph *—or the vine itself may have had the same effect—ha, ha! they never inquire too scrupulously into these matters in which the gods may be agents. And let the worst arrive—let it be known that it is a love-charm—why, madness is a common effect of philtres; and even the fair she that gave it finds indulgence in the excuse. Mighty Hermes, have I ministered to thee cunningly?"

"Thou shalt have twenty years longer date for this," returned Arbaces. "I will write anew the epoch of thy fate on the face of the pale stars—thou shalt not serve in vain the Master of the Flaming Belt. And here, Saga, carve thee out, by these golden tools, a warmer cell in this dreary cavern—one service to me shall countervail a thousand divinations by sieve and shears to the gaping rustics." So saying, he cast upon the floor a heavy purse, which clinked not unmusically to the ear of the hag, who loved the consciousness of possessing the means to purchase comforts she disdained. "Farewell," said Arbaces, "fail not—outwatch the stars in concocting thy beverage—thou shalt lord it over thy sisters at the Walnut-tree,† when thou tellest them that thy patron and thy friend is Hermes the Egyptian. To-morrow night we meet again."

He stayed not to hear the valediction or the thanks of the witch; with a quick step he passed into the moonlit air, and hastened down the mountain.

The witch, who followed his steps to the threshold, stood long at the entrance of the cavern, gazing fixedly on his receding form; and as the sad moonlight streamed upon her shadowy form and deathlike face, emerging from the dismal rocks, it seemed as if one gifted, indeed, by supernatural magic had escaped from the dreary Orcus; and, the foremost of its ghostly throng, stood at its black portals—vainly summoning his return, or vainly sighing to rejoin him. The hag then slowly re-entering the cave, groaningly picked up the heavy purse, took the lamp from its stand, and, passing to the remotest depth of her cell, a black and abrupt passage,

* To see a nymph was to become mad, according to classic and popular superstition.

† The celebrated and immemorial rendezvous of the witches at Benevento. The winged serpent attached to it, long an object of idolatry in those parts, was probably consecrated by Egyptian superstitions.

which was not visible, save at a near approach, closed round as it was with jutting and sharp crags, yawned before her; she went several yards along this gloomy path, which sloped gradually downwards, as if towards the bowels of the earth, and, lifting a stone, deposited her treasure in a hole beneath, which, as the lamp pierced its secrets, seemed already to contain coins of various value, wrung from the credulity or gratitude of her visitors.

"I love to look at you," said she, apostrophizing the monies; "for when I see you I feel that I am indeed of power. And I am to have twenty years' longer life to increase your store! O thou great Hermes!"

She replaced the stone, and continued her path onward for some paces, when she stopped before a deep irregular fissure in the earth. Here, as she bent—strange, rumbling, hoarse, and distant sounds might be heard, while ever and anon, with a loud and grating noise which, to use a homely but faithful simile, seemed to resemble the grinding of steel upon wheels, volumes of streaming and dark smoke issued forth, and rushed spirally along the cavern.

"The Shades are noisier than their wont," said the hag, shaking her gray locks; and, looking into the cavity, she beheld, far down, glimpses of a long streak of light, intensely but darkly red. "Strange!" she said, shrinking back; "it is only within the last two days that dull deep light hath been visible—what can it portend?"

The fox, who had attended the steps of his fell mistress, uttered a dismal howl, and ran cowering back to the inner cave; a cold shuddering seized the hag herself at the cry of the animal, which, causeless as it seemed, the superstitions of the time considered deeply ominous. She muttered her placatory charm, and tottered back into her cavern, where, amidst her herbs and incantations, she prepared to execute the orders of the Egyptian.

"He called me dotard," said she, as the smoke curled from the hissing caldron: "when the jaws drop, and the grinders fall, and the heart scarce beats, it is a pitiable thing to dote; but when," she added, with a savage and exultant grin, "the young, and the beautiful, and the strong, are suddenly smitten into idiocy—ah, *that* is terrible! Burn flame—simmer herb—swelter toad—I cursed him, and he shall be cursed!"

On that night, and at the same hour which witnessed the dark and unholy interview between Arbaces and the Saga, Apæcides was baptized.

CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS OF EVENTS.—THE PLOT THICKENS.—THE WEB IS WOVEN, BUT THE NET CHANGES HANDS.

"And you have the courage then, Julia, to seek the Witch of Vesuvius this evening; in company, too, with that fearful man?"

"Why, Nydia?" replied Julia, timidly; "dost thou really think there is anything to dread? These old hags, with their enchanted mirrors, their trembling sieves, and their moon-gathered herbs, are, I imagine, but crafty impostors; who have learned, perhaps, nothing but the very charm for which I apply to their skill, and which is drawn but from the knowledge of the field's herbs and simples. Wherefore should I dread?"

"Dost thou not fear thy companion?"

"What, Arbaces? By Dian, I never saw lover more courteous than that same magician! And were he not so dark, he would be even handsome."

Blind as she was, Nydia had the penetration to perceive that Julia's mind was not one that the gallantries of Arbaces were likely to terrify. She therefore dissuaded her no more; but nursed, in her excited heart, the wild and increasing desire to know if sorcery had indeed a spell to fascinate love to love.

"Let me go with thee, noble Julia," said she at length; "my presence is no protection, but I should like to be beside thee to the last."

"Thine offer pleases me much," replied the daughter of Diomed. "Yet how canst thou contrive it? we may not return until late, they will miss thee."

"Ione is indulgent," replied Nydia. "If thou wilt permit me to sleep beneath thy roof, I will say that thou, an early patroness

and friend, hast invited me to pass the day with thee, and sing thee my Thessalian songs; her courtesy will readily grant to thee so light a boon."

"Nay, ask for thyself!" said the haughty Julia. "*I* stoop to request no favor from the Neapolitan!"

"Well, be it so. I will take my leave now, make my request, which I know will be readily granted, and return shortly."

"Do so; and thy bed shall be prepared in my own chamber."

With that Nydia left the fair Pompeian.

On her way back to Ione she was met by the chariot of Glaucus, on whose fiery and curveting steeds was riveted the gaze of the crowded street.

He kindly stopped for a moment to speak to the flower-girl.

"Blooming as thine own roses, my gentle Nydia! And how is thy fair mistress?—recovered, I trust, from the effects of the storm?"

"I have not seen her this morning," answered Nydia, "but——"

"But what? draw back—the horses are too near thee."

"But, think you Ione will permit me to pass the day with Julia, the daughter of Diomed?—She wishes it, and was kind to me when I had few friends."

"The gods bless thy grateful heart! I will answer for Ione's permission."

"Then I may stay over the night, and return to-morrow?" said Nydia, shrinking from the praise she so little merited.

"As thou and fair Julia please. Commend me to her;—and, hark ye, Nydia, when thou hearest her speak, note the contrast of her voice with that of the silver-toned Ione. —*Vale!*"

His spirits entirely recovered from the effect of the past night, his locks waving in the wind, his joyous and elastic heart bounding with every spring of his Parthian steeds, a very prototype of his country's god, full of youth and of love—Glaucus was borne rapidly to his mistress.

Enjoy while ye may the present—who can read the future?

As the evening darkened, Julia, reclined within her litter, which was capacious enough also to admit her blind companion, took her way to the rural baths indicated by Arbaces. To her natural levity of disposition, her enterprise brought less of terror than of pleasurable excitement; above all, she glowed at the thought of her coming triumph over the hated Neapolitan.

A small but gay group was collected round the door of the villa, as her litter passed by it to the private entrance of the baths appropriated to the women.

"Methinks, by this dim light," said one of the bystanders, "I recognize the slaves of Diomed."

"True, Clodius," said Sallust: "it is probably the litter of his daughter Julia. She is rich, my friend; why dost thou not proffer thy suit to her?"

"Why, I had once hoped that Glaucus would have married her. She does not disguise her attachment; and then, as he gambles freely and with ill success——"

"The sesterces would have passed to thee, wise Clodius. A wife is a good thing—when it belongs to another man!"

"But," continued Clodius, "as Glaucus is, I understand, to wed the Neapolitan, I think I must even try my chance with the rejected maid. After all, the lamp of Hymen will be gilt, and the vessel will reconcile one to the odor of the flame. I shall only protest, my Sallust, against Diomed's making *thee* trustee to his daughter's fortune." *

"Ha! ha! let us within, my *comissator;* the wine and the garlands wait us."

Dismissing her slaves to that part of the house set apart for their entertainment, Julia entered the baths with Nydia, and declining the offers of the attendants, passed by a private door into the garden behind.

"She comes by appointment, be sure," said one of the slaves.

"What is that to thee?" said a superintendent sourly; "she pays for the baths and does not waste the saffron. Such appointments are the best part of the trade. Hark! do you not hear the widow Fulvia clapping her hands? Run, fool—run!"

* It was an ancient Roman law, that no one should make a woman his heir. This law was evaded by the parent's assigning his fortune to a friend in trust for his daughter, but the trustee might keep it if he liked. The law had, however, fallen into disuse before the date of this story.

Julia and Nydia, avoiding the more public part of the garden, arrived at the place specified by the Egyptian. In a small circular plot of grass the stars gleamed upon the statue of Silenus:—the merry god reclined upon a fragment of rock—the lynx of Bacchus at his feet—and over his mouth he held, with extended arm, a bunch of grapes, which he seemingly laughed to welcome ere he devoured.

"I see not the magician," said Julia, looking round; when, as she spoke, the Egyptian slowly emerged from the neighboring foliage, and the light fell palely over his sweeping robes.

"Salve, sweet maiden!—But ha! whom hast thou here? we must have no companions!"

"It is but the blind flower-girl, wise magician," replied Julia: "herself a Thessalian."

"Oh! Nydia!" said the Egyptian; "I know her well."

Nydia drew back and shuddered.

"Thou hast been at my house, methinks!" said he, approaching his voice to Nydia's ear; "thou knowest the oath!—Silence and secrecy, now as then, or beware!"

"Yet," he added, musingly to himself, "why confide more than is necessary, even in the blind—Julia, canst thou trust thyself alone with me? Believe me, the magician is less formidable than he seems."

As he spoke, he gently drew Julia aside.

"The witch loves not many visitors at once," said he; "leave Nydia here till your return; she can be of no assistance to us; and, for protection—your own beauty suffices—your own beauty and your own rank; yes, Julia, I know thy name and birth. Come, trust thyself with me, fair rival of the youngest of the Naiads!"

The vain Julia was not, as we have seen, easily affrighted; she was moved by the flattery of Arbaces, and she readily consented to suffer Nydia to await her return; nor did Nydia press her presence. At the sound of the Egyptian's voice, all her terror of him returned: she felt a sentiment of pleasure at learning she was not to travel in his companionship.

She returned to the Bath-house, and in one of the private chambers waited their return. Many and bitter were the thoughts of this wild girl as she sat there in her eternal darkness. She thought of her own desolate fate, far from her native land, far from the bland cares that once assuaged the April sorrows of childhood;—deprived of the light of day, with none but strangers to guide her steps, accursed by the one soft feeling of her heart, loving and without hope, save the dim and unholy ray which shot across her mind, as her Thessalian fancies questioned of the force of spells, and the gifts of magic!

Nature had sown in the heart of this poor girl the seeds of virtue never destined to ripen. The lessons of adversity are not always salutary—sometimes they soften and amend, but as often they indurate and pervert. If we consider ourselves more harshly treated by fate than those around us, and do not acknowledge in our own deeds the justice of the severity, we become too apt to deem the world our enemy, to case ourselves in defiance, to wrestle against our *softer self*, and to indulge the darker passions which are so easily fermented by the sense of injustice. Sold early into slavery, sentenced to a sordid task-master, exchanging her situation, only yet more to embitter her lot—the kindlier feelings, naturally profuse in the breast of Nydia, were nipped and blighted. Her sense of right and wrong was confused by a passion to which she had so madly surrendered herself; and the same intense and tragic emotions which we read of in the women of the classic age—a Myrrha, a Medea—and which hurried and swept away the whole soul when once delivered to love—ruled, and rioted in, her breast.

Time passed: a light step entered the chamber where Nydia yet indulged her gloomy meditations.

"Oh, thanked be the immortal gods!" said Julia. "I have returned, I have left that terrible cavern! Come, Nydia! let us away forthwith!"

It was not till they were seated in the litter that Julia again spoke.

"Oh!" said she, tremblingly, "such a scene! such fearful incantations! and the dead face of the hag!—But, let us talk not of it. I have obtained the potion—she pledges its effect. My rival shall be sud-

denly indifferent to his eye, and I, I alone, the idol of Glaucus!"

"Glaucus!" exclaimed Nydia.

"Ay! I told thee, girl, at first, that it was *not* the Athenian whom I loved: but I see now that I may trust thee wholly—it *is* the beautiful Greek!"

What then were Nydia's emotions! she had connived, she had assisted, in tearing Glaucus from Ione; but only to transfer, by all the power of magic, his affections yet more hopelessly to another. Her heart swelled almost to suffocation—she gasped for breath—in the darkness of the vehicle, Julia did not perceive the agitation of her companion; she went on rapidly dilating on the promised effect of her acquisition, and on her approaching triumph over Ione, every now and then abruptly digressing to the horror of the scene she had quitted—the unmoved mien of Arbaces, and his authority over the dreadful Saga.

Meanwhile Nydia recovered her self-possession; a thought flashed across her: she slept in the chamber of Julia—she might possess herself of the potion.

They arrived at the house of Diomed, and descended to Julia's apartment, where the night's repast awaited them.

"Drink, Nydia, thou must be cold; the air was chill to-night: as for me, my veins are yet ice."

And Julia unhesitatingly quaffed deep draughts of the spiced wine.

"Thou hast the potion," said Nydia; "let me hold it in my hands. How small the phial is! of what color is the draught?"

"Clear as crystal," replied Julia, as she retook the philtre; "thou couldst not tell it from this water. The witch assures me it is tasteless. Small though the phial, it suffices for a life's fidelity: it is to be poured into any liquid; and Glaucus will only know what he has quaffed by the effect."

"Exactly like this water in appearance?"

"Yes, sparkling and colorless as this. How bright it seems! it is as the very essence of moonlit dews. Bright thing! how thou shinest on my hopes through thy crystal vase!"

"And how is it sealed?"

"But by one little stopper—I withdraw it now—the draught gives no odor. Strange, that that which speaks to neither sense should thus command all!"

"Is the effect instantaneous?"

"Usually;—but sometimes it remains dormant for a few hours."

"Oh, how sweet is this perfume!" said Nydia, suddenly, as she took up a small bottle on the table, and bent over its fragrant contents.

"Thinkest thou so? the bottle is set with gems of some value. Thou wouldst not have the bracelet yester-morn?—wilt thou take the bottle?"

"It ought to be such perfumes as these that should remind one who cannot see of the generous Julia. If the bottle be not too costly——"

"Oh! I have a thousand costlier ones; take it, child!"

Nydia bowed her gratitude, and placed the bottle in her vest.

"And the draught would be equally efficacious, whoever administers it?"

"If the most hideous hag beneath the sun bestowed it, such is its asserted virtue that Glaucus would deem her beautiful, and none but her!"

Julia, warmed by wine, and the reaction of her spirits, was now all animation and delight; she laughed loud, and talked on a hundred matters—nor was it till the night had advanced far towards morning that she summoned her slaves and undressed.

When they were dismissed, she said to Nydia,—

"I will not suffer this holy draught to quit my presence till the hour comes for its uses. Lie under my pillow, bright spirit, and give me happy dreams!"

So saying, she placed the potion under her pillow. Nydia's heart beat violently.

"Why dost thou drink that unmixed water, Nydia? Take the wine by its side."

"I am fevered," replied the blind girl, "and the water cools me. I will place this bottle by my bed-side, it refreshes in these summer nights, when the dews of sleep fall not on our lips. Fair Julia, I must leave thee very early—so Ione bids—perhaps before thou art awake: accept, therefore, now my congratulations."

"Thanks: when next we meet you may find Glaucus at my feet."

They had retired to their couches, and Julia, worn out by the excitement of the day, soon slept. But anxious and burning thoughts rolled over the mind of the wakeful Thessalian. She listened to the calm breathing of Julia; and her ear, accustomed to the finest distinctions of sound, speedily assured her of the deep slumber of her companion.

"Now befriend me, Venus!" said she, softly.

She rose gently, and poured the perfume from the gift of Julia upon the marble floor —she rinsed it several times carefully with the water that was beside her, and then easily finding the bed of Julia (for night to her was as day), she pressed her trembling hand under the pillow and seized the potion. Julia stirred not, her breath regularly fanned the burning cheek of the blind girl. Nydia, then, opening the phial, poured its contents into the bottle, which easily contained them; and then refilling the former reservoir of the potion with that limpid water which Julia had assured her it so resembled, she once more placed the phial in its former place. She then stole again to her couch and waited —with what thoughts!—the dawning day.

The sun had risen—Julia slept till—Nydia noiselessly dressed herself, placed her treasure carefully in her vest, took up her staff, and hastened to quit the house.

The porter, Medon, saluted her kindly as she descended the steps that led to the street: she heard him not; her mind was confused and lost in the whirl of tumultuous thoughts, each thought a passion. She felt the pure morning air upon her cheek, but it cooled not her scorching veins.

"Glaucus," she murmured, "all the love-charms of the wildest magic could not make thee love me as I love thee. Ione!—ah, away hesitation! away remorse! Glaucus, my fate is in thy smile; and thine! O hope! O joy! O transport!—*thy* fate is in these hands!"

BOOK THE FOURTH.

"Philtra nocent animis, vimque furoris habent."—OVID.

Philtres are baneful to the reasoning mind,
And have the strength of madness——

CHAPTER I.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ZEAL OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.—TWO MEN COME TO A PERILOUS RESOLVE.—WALLS HAVE EARS—PARTICULARLY SACRED WALLS!

WHOEVER regards the early history of Christianity, will perceive how necessary to its triumph was that fierce spirit of zeal, which, fearing no danger, accepting no compromise, inspired its champions and sustained its martyrs. In a dominant church the genius of intolerance *betrays* its cause;—in a weak and a persecuted church, the same genius mainly *supports*. It was necessary to scorn, to loathe, to abhor the creeds of other men, in order to conquer the temptations which they presented—it was necessary rigidly to believe not only that the Gospel was the true faith, but the *sole* true faith that saved, in order to nerve the disciple to the austerity of its doctrine, and to encourage him to the sacred and perilous chivalry of converting the Polytheist and the Heathen. The sectarian sternness which confined virtue and heaven to a chosen few, which saw demons in other gods, and the penalties of hell in another religion—made the believer naturally anxious to convert all to whom he felt the ties of human affection; and the circle thus traced by benevolence to man was yet more widened by a desire for the glory of God. It was for the honor of the Christian faith that the Christian boldly forced his tenets upon the scepticism of some, the repugnance of others, the sage contempt of the philosopher, the pious shudder of the people;—his very intolerance supplied him with his fittest instruments of success; and the soft Heathen began at last to imagine there must indeed be something holy in a zeal wholly foreign to his experience, which stopped at no obstacle, dreaded no danger, and even at the torture, or on the scaffold, referred a dispute far other than the calm differences of speculative philosophy to the tribunal of an Eternal Judge. It was thus that the same fervor which made the Churchman of the middle age a bigot without mercy, made the Christian of the early days a hero without fear.

Of these more fiery, daring, and earnest natures, not the least ardent was Olinthus. No sooner had Apæcides been received by the rites of baptism into the bosom of the church, than the Nazarene hastened to make him conscious of the impossibility to retain the office and robes of priesthood. He could not, it was evident, profess to worship God, and continue even outwardly to honor the idolatrous altars of the Fiend.

Nor was this all: the sanguine and impetuous mind of Olinthus beheld in the power of Apæcides the means of divulging to the deluded people the juggling mysteries of the oracular Isis. He thought Heaven had sent this instrument of his design in order to disabuse the eyes of the crowd, and prepare the way, perchance, for the conversion of the whole city. He did not hesitate then to appeal to all the new-kindled enthusiasm of Apæcides, to arouse his courage, and to stimulate his zeal. They met, according to previous agreement, the evening after the baptism of Apæcides, in the grove of Cybele, which we have before described.

"At the next solemn consultation of the oracle," said Olinthus, as he proceeded in the warmth of his address, "advance yourself to the railing, proclaim aloud to the people the deception they endure, invite them to enter,

to be themselves the witness of the gross but artful mechanism of imposture thou hast described to me. Fear not—the Lord, who protected Daniel, shall protect thee; *we*, the community of Christians, will be amongst the crowd; *we* will urge on the shrinking: and in the first flush of the popular indignation and shame, I, myself, upon those very altars, will plant the palm-branch typical of the Gospel—and to my tongue shall descend the rushing Spirit of the living God."

Heated and excited as he was, this suggestion was not unpleasing to Apæcides. He was rejoiced at so early an opportunity of distinguishing his faith in his new sect, and to his holier feelings were added those of a vindictive loathing at the imposition he had himself suffered, and a desire to avenge it. In that sanguine and elastic *overbound* of obstacles (the rashness necessary to all who undertake venturous and loftly actions), neither Olinthus nor the proselyte perceived the impediments to the success of their scheme, which might be found in the reverent superstition of the people themselves, who would probably be loth, before the sacred altars of the great Egyptian goddess, to believe even the testimony of her priest against her power.

Apæcides then assented to this proposal with a readiness which delighted Olinthus. They parted with the understanding that Olinthus should confer with the more important of his Christian brethren on his great enterprise, should receive their advice and the assurances of their support on the eventful day. It so chanced that one of the festivals of Isis was to be held on the second day after this conference. The festival proffered a ready occasion for the design. They appointed to meet once more on the next evening at the same spot; and in that meeting were finally to be settled the order and details of the disclosure for the following day.

It happened that the latter part of this conference had been held near the sacellum, or small chapel, which I have described in the early part of this work; and so soon as the forms of the Christian and the priest had disappeared from the grove, a dark and ungainly figure emerged from behind the chapel.

"I have tracked you with some effect, my brother flamen," soliloquized the eavesdropper; "you, the priest of Isis, have not for mere idle discussion conferred with this gloomy Christian. Alas! that I could not hear all your precious plot: enough! I find, at least, that you meditate revealing the sacred mysteries, and that to-morrow you meet again at this place to plan the how and the when. May Osiris sharpen my ears then, to detect the whole of your unheard-of audacity! When I have learned more, I must confer at once with Arbaces. We will frustrate you, my friends, deep as you think yourselves. At present, my breast is a locked treasury of your secret."

Thus muttering, Calenus, for it was he, wrapped his robe round him, and strode thoughtfully homeward.

CHAPTER II.

A CLASSIC HOST, COOK, AND KITCHEN.—APÆCIDES SEEKS IONE.—THEIR CONVERSATION.

It was then the day for Diomed's banquet to the most select of his friends. The graceful Glaucus, the beautiful Ione, the official Pansa, the high-born Clodius, the immortal Fulvius, the exquisite Lepidus, the epicurean Sallust, were not the only honorers of his festival. He expected, also, an invalid senator from Rome (a man of considerable repute and favor at court), and a great warrior from Herculaneum, who had fought with Titus against the Jews, and having enriched himself prodigiously in the wars, was always told by his friends that his country was eternally indebted to his disinterested exertions! The party, however, extended to a yet greater number: for although, critically speaking, it was, at one time, thought inelegant among the Romans to entertain less than three or more than nine at their banquets, yet this rule was easily disregarded by the ostentatious. And we are told, indeed, in history, that one of the most splendid of these entertainers usually feasted a select party of three hundred. Diomed, however, more modest, contented himself with doubling the number of the Muses. His party

consisted of eighteen, no unfashionable number in the present day.

It was the morning of Diomed's banquet; and Diomed himself, though he greatly affected the gentleman and the scholar, retained enough of his mercantile experience to know that a master's eye makes a ready servant. Accordingly, with his tunic ungirdled on his portly stomach, his easy slippers on his feet, a small wand in his hand, wherewith he now directed the gaze, and now corrected the back, of some duller menial, he went from chamber to chamber of his costly villa.

He did not disdain even a visit to that sacred apartment in which the priests of the festival prepare their offerings. On entering the kitchen, his ears were agreeably stunned by the noise of dishes and pans, of oaths and commands. Small as this indispensable chamber seems to have been in all the houses of Pompeii, it was, nevertheless, usually fitted up with all that amazing variety of stoves and shapes, stewpans and saucepans, cutters and moulds, without which a cook of spirit, no matter whether he be an ancient or a modern, declares it utterly impossible that he can give you anything to eat. And as fuel was then, as now, dear and scarce in those regions, great seems to have been the dexterity exercised in preparing as many things as possible with as little fire. An admirable contrivance of this nature may be still seen in the Neapolitan Museum, viz., a portable kitchen, about the size of a folio volume, containing stoves for four dishes, and an apparatus for heating water or other beverages.

Across the small kitchen flitted many forms which the quick eye of the master did not recognize.

"Oh! oh!" grumbled he to himself, "that cursed Congrio hath invited a whole legion of cooks to assist him. They won't serve for nothing, and this is another item in the total of my day's expenses. By Bacchus! thrice lucky shall I be if the slaves do not help themselves to some of the drinking vessels: ready, alas, are their hands, capacious are their tunics. *Me miserum!*"

The cooks, however, worked on, seemingly heedless of the apparition of Diomed.

"Ho, Euclio, your egg-pan! What, is this the largest? it only holds thirty-three eggs: in the houses *I* usually serve, the smallest egg-pan holds fifty, if need be!"

"The unconscionable rogue!" thought Diomed; "he talks of eggs as if they were a sesterce a hundred!"

"By Mercury!" cried a pert little culinary disciple, scarce in his novitiate; "whoever saw such antique sweetmeat shapes as these?—it is impossible to do credit to one's art with such rude materials. Why, Sallust's commonest sweetmeat shape represents the whole siege of Troy; Hector and Paris, and Helen—with little Astyanax and the Wooden Horse into the bargain!"

"Silence, fool!" said Congrio, the cook of the house, who seemed to leave the chief part of the battle to his allies. "My master, Diomed, is not one of those expensive good-for-noughts, who must have the last fashion, cost what it will!"

"Thou liest, base slave!" cried Diomed, in a great passion,—"and thou costest me already enough to have ruined Lucullus himself! Come out of thy den, I want to talk to thee."

The slave, with a sly wink at his confederates, obeyed the command.

"Man of three letters," * said Diomed, with his face of solemn anger, "how didst thou dare to invite all those rascals into my house?—I see thief written in every line of their faces."

"Yet I assure you, master, that they are men of most respectable character—the best cooks of the place; it is a great favor to get them. But for *my* sake——"

"Thy sake, unhappy Congrio!" interrupted Diomed; "and by what purloined monies of mine, by what reserved filchings from marketing, by what goodly meats converted into grease, and sold in the suburbs, by what false charges for bronzes marred, and earthenware broken—hast thou been enabled to make them serve thee for *thy* sake?"

"Nay, master, do not impeach my honesty! May the gods desert me if——"

"Swear not!" again interrupted the choleric Diomed, "for then the gods will smite thee for a perjurer, and I shall lose my cook on the eve of dinner. But enough of this at present; keep a sharp eye on thy ill-favored

* The common witty objurgation, from the triliteral word "fur" (thief).

assistants, and tell me no tales to-morrow of vases broken, and cups miraculously vanished, or thy whole back shall be one pain. And hark thee! thou knowest thou hast made me pay for those Phrygian *attagens** enough, by Hercules, to have feasted a sober man for a year together—see that they be not one iota over-roasted. The last time, O Congrio, that I gave a banquet to my friends, when thy vanity did so boldly undertake the becoming appearance of a Melian crane—thou knowest it came up like a stone from Ætna—as if all the fires of Phlegethon had been scorching out its juices. Be modest this time, Congrio—wary and modest. Modesty is the nurse of great actions; and in all other things, as in this, if thou wilt not spare thy master's purse, at least consult thy master's glory."

"There shall not be such a cœna seen at Pompeii since the days of Hercules."

"Softly, softly—thy cursed boasting again! But, I say, Congrio—yon *homunculus*—yon pigmy assailant of my cranes—yon pert-tongued neophyte of the kitchen, was there aught but insolence on his tongue when he maligned the comeliness of my sweetmeat shapes? I would not be out of the fashion, Congrio."

"It is but the custom of us cooks," replied Congrio, gravely, "to undervalue our tools, in order to increase the effect of our art. The sweetmeat shape is a fair shape, and a lovely; but I would recommend my master, at the first occasion, to purchase some new ones of a——"

"That will suffice," exclaimed Diomed, who seemed resolved never to allow his slave to finish his sentences. "Now, resume thy charge—shine—eclipse thyself. Let men envy Diomed his cook—let the slaves of Pompeii style thee Congrio the great! Go—yet stay—thou hast not spent all the monies I gave thee for the marketing?"

"'*All!*'—alas! the nightingales' tongues and the Roman *tomacula*,† and the oysters from Britain, and sundry other things, too numerous now to recite, are yet left unpaid for. But what matter? every one trusts the *Archimagirus** of Diomed the wealthy!"

"Oh, unconscionable prodigal!—what waste!—what profusion!—I am ruined! But go, hasten—inspect!—taste!—perform!—surpass thyself! Let the Roman senator not despise the poor Pompeian. Away, slave!—and remember the Phrygian attagens."

The chief disappeared within his natural domain, and Diomed rolled back his portly presence to the more courtly chambers. All was to his liking—the flowers were fresh, the fountains played briskly, the mosaic pavements were smooth as mirrors.

"Where is my daughter Julia?" he asked.

"At the bath."

"Ah! that reminds me!—time wanes!—and I must bathe also."

Our story returns to Apæcides. On awaking that day from the broken and feverish sleep which had followed his adoption of a faith so strikingly and sternly at variance with that in which his youth had been nurtured, the young priest could scarcely imagine that he was not yet in a dream; he had crossed the fatal river—the past was henceforth to have no sympathy with the future; the two worlds were distinct and separate,—that which had been, from that which was to be. To what a bold and adventurous enterprise he had pledged his life!—to unveil the mysteries in which he had participated—to desecrate the altars he had served—to denounce the goddess whose ministering robe he wore! Slowly he became sensible of the hatred and the horror he should provoke amongst the pious, even if successful; if frustrated in his daring attempt, what penalties might he not incur for an offence hitherto unheard of—for which no specific law, derived from experience, was prepared; and which, for that very reason, precedents, dragged from the sharpest armory of obsolete and inapplicable legislation, would probably be distorted to meet! His friends,—the sister of his youth,—could he expect justice, though he might receive compassion, from them! This brave and

* The attagen of Phrygia or Ionia (the bird thus *anglicized* in the plural) was held in peculiar esteem by the Romans. "Attagen carnis suavissimæ."—*Athen.*, lib. ix., cap 8, 9. It was a little bigger than a partridge.

† "——candiduli divina tomacula Porci."—JUVENAL, x. l. 355. A rich and delicate species of sausage.

* Archimagirus was the lofty title of the chief cook.

heroic act would by their heathen eyes be regarded, perhaps, as a heinous apostasy—at the best, as a pitiable madness.

He dared, he renounced, every thing in this world, in the hope of securing that eternity in the next, which had so suddenly been revealed to him. While these thoughts on the one hand invaded his breast, on the other hand his pride, his courage, and his virtue, mingled with reminiscences of revenge for deceit, of indignant disgust at fraud, conspired to raise and to support him.

The conflict was sharp and keen; but his new feelings triumphed over his old: and a mighty argument in favor of wrestling with the sanctities of old opinions and hereditary forms might be found in the conquest over both, achieved by that humble priest. Had the early Christians been more controlled by "the solemn plausibilities of custom"—less of democrats in the pure and lofty acceptation of that perverted word—Christianity would have perished in its cradle!

As each priest in succession slept several nights together in the chambers of the temple, the term imposed on Apæcides was not yet completed; and when he had risen from his couch, attired himself, as usual, in his robes, and left his narrow chamber, he found himself before the altars of the temple.

In the exhaustion of his late emotions he had slept far into the morning, and the vertical sun already poured its fervid beams over the sacred place.

"Salve, Apæcides!" said a voice, whose natural asperity was smoothed by long artifice into an almost displeasing softness of tone. "Thou art late abroad; has the goddess revealed herself to thee in visions?"

"Could she reveal her true self to the people, Calenus, how incenseless would be these altars!"

"That," replied Calenus, "may possibly be true; but the deity is wise enough to hold commune with none but priests."

"A time may come when she will be unveiled without her own acquiescence."

"It is not likely: she has triumphed for countless ages. And that which has so long stood the test of time rarely succumbs to the lust of novelty. But hark ye, young brother! these sayings are indiscreet."

"It is not for thee to silence them," replied Apæcides, haughtily.

"So hot!—yet I will not quarrel with thee. Why, my Apæcides, has not the Egyptian convinced thee of the necessity of our dwelling together in unity? Has he not convinced thee of the wisdom of deluding the people and enjoying ourselves? If not, oh! brother, he is not that great magician he is esteemed."

"Thou, then, hast shared his lessons?" said Apæcides, with a hollow smile.

"Ay! but I stood less in need of them than thou. Nature had already gifted me with the love of pleasure, and the desire of gain and power. Long is the way that leads the voluptuary to the severities of life; but it is only one step from pleasant sin to sheltering hypocrisy. Beware the vengeance of the goddess, if the shortness of that step be disclosed!"

"Beware, thou, the hour when the tomb shall be rent and the rottenness exposed," returned Apæcides, solemnly. "Vale!"

With these words he left the flamen to his meditations. When he got a few paces from the temple, he turned to look back. Calenus had already disappeared in the entry room of the priests, for it now approached the hour of that repast which, called *prandium* by the ancients, answers in point of date to the breakfast of the moderns. The white and graceful fane gleamed brightly in the sun. Upon the altars before it rose the incense and bloomed the garlands. The priest gazed long and wistfully upon the scene—it was the last time that it was ever beheld by him!

He then turned and pursued his way slowly towards the house of Ione; for before, possibly, the last tie that united them was cut in twain—before the uncertain peril of the next day was incurred, he was anxious to see his last surviving relative, his fondest, as his earliest friend.

He arrived at her house, and found her in the garden with Nydia.

"This is kind, Apæcides," said Ione, joyfully; "and how eagerly have I wished to see thee!—what thanks do I not owe thee! How churlish hast thou been to answer none of my letters—to abstain from coming hither to receive the expressions of my gratitude!

Oh, thou hast assisted to preserve thy sister from dishonor! What, what can she say to thank thee, now thou art come at last?"

"My sweet Ione, thou owest me no gratitude, for thy cause was mine. Let us avoid that subject, let us recur not to that impious man—how hateful to both of us! I may have a speedy opportunity to teach the world the nature of his pretended wisdom and hypocritical severity. But let us sit down, my sister; I am wearied with the heat of the sun; let us sit in yonder shade, and, for a little while longer, be to each other what we have been."

Beneath a wide plane-tree, with the cistus and the arbutus clustering round them, the living fountain before, the greensward beneath their feet; the gay cicada, once so dear to Athens, rising merrily ever and anon amidst the grass; the butterfly, beautiful emblem of the soul, dedicated to Psyche, and which has continued to furnish illustrations to the Christian bard, rich in the glowing colors caught from Sicilian skies,* hovering above the sunny flowers, itself like a winged flower—in this spot, and this scene, the brother and the sister sat together for the last time on earth. You may tread now on the same place; but the garden is no more, the columns are shattered, the fountain hath ceased to play. Let the traveller search amongst the ruins of Pompeii for the house of Ione. Its remains are yet visible; but I will not betray them to the gaze of commonplace tourists. He who is more sensitive than the herd will discover them easily: when he has done so, let him keep the secret.

They sat down, and Nydia, glad to be alone, retired to the farther end of the garden.

"Ione, my sister," said the young convert, "place your hand upon my brow; let me feel your cool touch. Speak to me, too, for your gentle voice is like a breeze that hath freshness as well as music. Speak to me, but *forbear to bless me!* Utter not one word of those forms of speech which our childhood was taught to consider sacred!"

"Alas! and what then shall I say? Our language of affection is so woven with that of worship, that the words grow chilled and trite if I banish from them allusion to our gods."

"*Our Gods!*" murmured Apæcides, with a shudder: "thou slightest my request already."

"Shall I speak then to thee only of Isis?"

"The Evil Spirit! No, rather be dumb for ever, unless at least thou canst—but away, away this talk! Not now will we dispute and cavil; not now will we judge harshly of each other. Thou, regarding me as an apostate! and I all sorrow and shame for thee as an idolater. No, my sister, let us avoid such topics and such thoughts. In thy sweet presence a calm falls over my spirit. For a little while I forget. As I thus lay my temples on thy bosom, as I thus feel thy gentle arm embrace me, I think that we are children once more, and that the heaven smiles equally upon both. For oh! if hereafter I escape, no matter what peril, and it be permitted me to address thee on one sacred and awful subject; should I find thine ear closed and thy heart hardened, what hope for myself could countervail the despair for thee? In thee, my sister, I behold a likeness made beautiful, made noble, of myself. Shall the mirror live for ever, and the form itself be broken as the potter's clay? Ah, no—no—thou wilt listen to me yet! Dost thou remember how we went into the fields by Baiæ, hand in hand together, to pluck the flowers of spring? Even so, hand in hand, shall we enter the Eternal Garden, and crown ourselves with imperishable asphodel!"

Wondering and bewildered by words she could not comprehend, but excited even to tears by the plaintiveness of their tone, Ione listened to these outpourings of a full and oppressed heart. In truth, Apæcides himself was softened much beyond his ordinary mood, which to outward seeming was usually either sullen or impetuous. For the noblest desires are of a jealous nature—they engross, they absorb the soul, and often leave the splenetic humors stagnant and unheeded at the surface. Unheeding the petty things around us, we are deemed morose:—impatient at earthly interruption to the diviner dreams, we are thought irritable and churlish. For as there is no chimera vainer than the

* In Sicily are found, perhaps, the most beautiful varieties of the butterfly.

hope that one human heart shall find sympathy in another, so none ever interpret us with justice; and none, no, not our nearest and our dearest ties, forbear with us in mercy! When we are dead and repentance comes too late, both friend and foe may wonder to think how little there was in us to forgive!

"I will talk to thee then of our early years," said Ione. "Shall yon blind girl sing to thee of the days of childhood? Her voice is sweet and musical, and she hath a song on that theme which contains none of those allusions it pains thee to hear."

"Dost thou remember the words, my sister?" asked Apæcides.

"Methinks yes; for the tune, which is simple, fixed them on my memory."

"Sing to me then thyself. My ear is not in unison with unfamiliar voices; and thine, Ione, full of household associations, has ever been to me more sweet than all the hireling melodies of Lycia or of Crete. Sing to me!"

Ione beckoned to a slave that stood in the portico, and sending for her lute, sang, when it arrived, to a tender and simple air, the following verses:—

A REGRET FOR CHILDHOOD.

I.

"It is not that our earlier Heaven
Escapes its April showers,
Or that to childhood's heart is given
No snake amidst the flowers.
Ah! twined with grief
Each brightest leaf
That 's wreath'd us by the Hours!
Young though we be, the Past may sting,
The Present may feed its sorrow;
But Hope shines bright on every thing
That waits us with the morrow.
Like sun-lit glades,
The dimmest shades
Some rosy beam can borrow.

II.

It is not that our later years
Of cares are woven wholly;
But smiles less swiftly chase the tears,
And wounds are heal'd more slowly.
And Memory's vow
To lost ones now,
Makes joys too bright, unholy.
And ever fled the Iris-bow
That smiled when clouds were o'er us.
If storms should burst, uncheer'd we go,
A drearier waste before us;—
And with the toys
Of childish joys,
We 've broke the staff that bore us!"

Wisely and delicately had Ione chosen that song, sad though its burthen seemed; for when we are deeply mournful, discordant above all others is the voice of mirth: the fittest spell is that borrowed from melancholy itself, for dark thoughts can be softened down when they cannot be brightened; and so they lose the precise and rigid outline of their truth, and their colors melt into the ideal. As the leech applies in remedy to the internal sore some outward irritation, which, by a gentler wound, draws away the venom of that which is more deadly, thus, in the rankling festers of the mind, our art is to divert to a milder sadness on the surface the pain that gnaweth at the core. And so with Apæcides, yielding to the influence of the silver voice that reminded him of the past, and told but of half the sorrow born to the present, he forgot his more immediate and fiery sources of anxious thought. He spent hours in making Ione alternately sing to, and converse with, him. And when he rose to leave her, it was with a calmed and lulled mind.

"Ione," said he, as he pressed her hand, "should you hear my name blackened and maligned, will you credit the aspersion?"

"Never, my brother, never?"

"Dost thou not imagine, according to thy belief, that the evil-doer is punished hereafter, and the good rewarded!"

"Can you doubt it?"

"Dost thou think, then, that he who is truly good should sacrifice every selfish interest in his zeal for virtue?"

"He who doth so is the equal of the gods."

"And thou believest that, according to the purity and courage with which he thus acts, shall be his portion of bliss beyond the grave?"

"So we are taught to hope."

"Kiss me, my sister. One question more.—Thou art to be wedded to Glaucus: perchance that marriage may separate us more hopelessly—but not of this speak I now;—thou art to be married to Glaucus,—dost thou love him? Nay, my sister, answer me by words."

"Yes!" murmured Ione, blushing.

"Dost thou feel that, for his sake, thou couldst renounce pride, brave dishonor, and

incur death? I have heard that when women really love, it is to that excess."

"My brother, all this could I do for Glaucus, and feel that it were not a sacrifice. There is no sacrifice to those who love, in what is borne for the one we love."

"Enough! shall woman feel thus for man, and man feel less devotion to his God?"

He spoke no more. His whole countenance seemed instinct and inspired with a divine life: his chest swelled proudly; his eyes glowed; on his forehead was writ the majesty of a man who can dare be noble! He turned to meet the eyes of Ione—earnest, wistful, fearful;—he kissed her fondly, strained her warmly to his breast, and in a moment more he had left the house.

Long did Ione remain in the same place, mute and thoughtful. The maidens again and again came to warn her of the deepening noon, and her engagement to Diomed's banquet. At length she woke from her reverie, and prepared, not with the pride of beauty, but listless and melancholy, for the festival: one thought alone reconciled her to the promised visit—she should meet Glaucus—she could confide to him her alarm and uneasiness for her brother.

CHAPTER III.

A FASHIONABLE PARTY AND A DINNER A LA MODE IN POMPEII.

MEANWHILE Sallust and Glaucus were slowly strolling towards the house of Diomed. Despite the habits of his life, Sallust was not devoid of many estimable qualities. He would have been an active friend, an useful citizen—in short, an excellent man, if he had not taken it into his head to be a philosopher. Brought up in the schools in which Roman plagiarism worshipped the echo of Grecian wisdom, he had imbued himself with those doctrines by which the later Epicureans corrupted the simple maxims of their great master. He gave himself altogether up to pleasure, and imagined there was no sage like a boon companion. Still, however, he had a considerable degree of learning, wit, and good nature; and the hearty frankness of his very vices seemed like virtue itself beside the utter corruption of Clodius and the prostrate effeminacy of Lepidus; and therefore Glaucus liked him the best of his companions; and he in turn, appreciating the nobler qualities of the Athenian, loved him almost as much as a cold muræna, or a bowl of the best Falernian.

"This is a vulgar old fellow, this Diomed," said Sallust; "but he has some good qualities—in his cellar!"

"And some charming ones—in his daughter."

"True, Glaucus: but you are not much moved by them, methinks. I fancy Clodius is desirous to be your successor."

"He is welcome.—At the banquet of Julia's beauty, no guest, be sure, is considered a musca." *

"You are severe: but she has, indeed, something of the Corinthian about her—they will be well-matched after all! What good-natured fellows we are to associate with that gambling good-for-nought!"

"Pleasure unites strange varieties," answered Glaucus. "He amuses me——"

"And flatters;—but then he pays himself well! He powders his praise with gold dust."

"You often hint that he plays unfairly—think you so really?"

"My dear Glaucus, a Roman noble has his dignity to keep up—dignity is very expensive—Clodius must cheat like a scoundrel, in order to live like a gentleman."

"Ha ha!—well, of late I have renounced the dice. Ah! Sallust, when I am wedded to Ione, I trust I may yet redeem a youth of follies. We are both born for better things than those in which we sympathize now—born to render our worship in nobler temples than the stye of Epicurus."

"Alas!" returned Sallust, in rather a melancholy tone, "what do we know more than this,—life is short—beyond the grave all is dark? There is no wisdom like that which says 'enjoy.'"

"By Bacchus! I doubt sometimes if we *do* enjoy the utmost of which life is capable."

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* Unwelcome and uninvited guests were called muscæ, or flies.

"I am a moderate man," returned Sallust, "and do not ask 'the utmost.' We are like malefactors, and intoxicate ourselves with wine and myrrh, as we stand on the brink of death; but, if we did not do so, the abyss would look very disagreeable. I own that I was inclined to be gloomy until I took so heartily to drinking—that is a new life, my Glaucus."

"Yes !—but it brings us next morning to a new death."

"Why, the next morning is unpleasant, I own; but, then, if it were not so, one would never be inclined to read. I study betimes —because, by the gods ! I am generally unfit for any thing else till noon."

"Fie, Scythian ! "

"Pshaw ! the fate of Pentheus to him who denies Bacchus."

"Well, Sallust, with all your faults, you are the best profligate I ever met; and verily, if I were in danger of life, you are the only man in all Italy who would stretch out a finger to save me."

"Perhaps *I* should not, if it were in the middle of supper. But, in truth, we Italians are fearfully selfish."

"So are all men who are not free," said Glaucus, with a sigh. "Freedom alone makes men sacrifice to each other."

"Freedom, then, must be a very fatiguing thing to an Epicurean," answered Sallust. "But here we are, at our host's."

As Diomed's villa is one of the most considerable in point of size of any yet discovered at Pompeii, and is, moreover, built much according to the specific instructions for a suburban villa laid down by the Roman architect, it may not be uninteresting briefly to describe the plan of the apartments through which our visitors passed.

They entered, then, by the same small vestibule at which we have before been presented to the aged Medon, and passed at once into a colonnade, technically termed the peristyle; for the main difference between the suburban villa and the town mansion consisted in placing, in the first, the said colonnade in exactly the same place as that which in the town mansion was occupied by the atrium. In the centre of the peristyle was an open court, which contained the impluvium.

From this peristyle descended a staircase to the offices; another narrow passage on the opposite side communicated with a garden; various small apartments surrounded the colonnade, appropriated probably to country visitors. Another door to the left on entering communicated with a small triangular portico, which belonged to the baths; and behind was the wardrobe, in which were kept the vests of the holyday suits of the slaves, and, perhaps, of the master. Seventeen centuries afterwards were found those relics of ancient finery calcined and crumbling; kept longer, alas ! than their thrifty lord foresaw.

Return we to the peristyle, and endeavor now to present to the reader a *coup-d'œil* of the whole suite of apartments, which immediately stretched before the steps of the visitors.

Let him then first imagine the columns of the portico, hung with festoons of flowers; the columns themselves in the lower part painted red, and the walls around glowing with various frescos; then, looking beyond a curtain, three parts drawn aside, the eye caught the tablinum or saloon (which was closed at will by glazed doors, now slid back into the walls). On either side of this tablinum were small rooms, one of which was a kind of cabinet of gems; and these apartments, as well as the tablinum, communicated with a long gallery, which opened at either end upon terraces; and between the terraces, and communicating with the central part of the gallery, was a hall, in which the banquet was that day prepared. All these apartments, though almost on a level with the street, were one story above the garden; and the terraces communicating with the gallery were continued into corridors, raised above the pillars, which, to the right and left, skirted the garden below.

Beneath, and on a level with the garden, ran the apartments we have already described as chiefly appropriated to Julia.

In the gallery, then, just mentioned, Diomed received his guests.

The merchant affected greatly the man of letters, and, therefore, he also affected a passion for every thing Greek; he paid particular attention to Glaucus.

"You will see, my friend," said he, with a wave of his hand, "that I am a little classi-

cal here—a little Cecropian—eh? The hall in which we shall sup is borrowed from the Greeks. It is an Œcus Cyzicene. Noble Sallust, they have not, I am told, this sort of apartment in Rome."

"Oh!" replied Sallust, with a half smile, "you Pompeians combine all that is most eligible in Greece and in Rome; may you, Diomed, combine the viands as well as the architecture!"

"You shall see—you shall see, my Sallust," replied the merchant. "We have a taste at Pompeii, and we have also money."

"They are two excellent things," replied Sallust. "But, behold, the lady Julia!"

The main difference, as I have before remarked, in the manner of life observed among the Athenians and Romans, was, that with the first, the modest women rarely or never took part in entertainments; with the latter, they were the common ornaments of the banquet: but when they were present at the feast, it usually terminated at an early hour.

Magnificently robed in white, interwoven with pearls and threads of gold, the handsome Julia entered the apartment.

Scarcely had she received the salutation of the two guests, ere Pansa and his wife, Lepidus, Clodius, and the Roman senator, entered almost simultaneously; then came the widow Fulvia; then the poet Fulvius, like to the widow in name if in nothing else; the warrior from Herculaneum, accompanied by his umbra, next stalked in; afterwards, the less eminent of the guests. Ione yet tarried.

It was the mode among the courteous ancients to flatter whenever it was in their power: accordingly it was a sign of ill-breeding to seat themselves immediately on entering the house of their host. After performing the salutation, which was usually accomplished by the same cordial shake of the right hand which we ourselves retain, and sometimes, by the yet more familiar embrace, they spent several minutes in surveying the apartment, and admiring the bonzes, the pictures, or the furniture, with which it was adorned—a mode very impolite according to our refined English notions, which place good-breeding in indifference. We would not for the world express much admiration of another man's house, for fear it should be thought we had never seen any thing so fine before!

"A beautiful statue this of Bacchus!" said the Roman senator.

"A mere trifle!" replied Diomed.

"What charming paintings!" said Fulvia.

"Mere trifles!" answered the owner.

"Exquisite candelabra!" cried the warrior.

"Exquisite!" echoed his umbra.

"Trifles! trifles!" reiterated the merchant.

Meanwhile, Glaucus found himself by one of the windows of the gallery, which communicated with the terraces, and the fair Julia by his side.

"Is it an Athenian virtue, Glaucus," said the merchant's daughter, "to shun those whom we once sought?"

"Fair Julia—no!"

"Yet, methinks, it is one of the qualities of Glaucus."

"Glaucus never shuns a *friend!*" replied the Greek, with some emphasis on the last word.

"May Julia rank among the number of his friends?"

"It would be an honor to the emperor to find a friend in one so lovely."

"You evade my question," returned the enamored Julia. "But tell me, is it true that you admire the Neapolitan Ione?"

"Does not beauty constrain our admiration?"

"Ah! subtle Greek, still do you fly the meaning of my words. But say, shall Julia be indeed your friend?"

"If she will so favor me, blessed be the gods! The day in which I am thus honored shall be ever marked in white."

"Yet, even while you speak, your eye is restless—your color comes and goes—you move away involuntarily—you are impatient to join Ione!"

For at that moment Ione had entered, and Glaucus had indeed betrayed the emotion noticed by the jealous beauty.

"Can admiration to one woman make me unworthy the friendship of another? Sanction not so, O Julia, the libels of the poets on your sex!"

"Well, you are right—or I will learn to

think so. Glaucus! yet one moment! You are to wed Ione: is it not so?"

"If the Fates permit, such is my blessed hope."

"Accept, then, from me, in token of our new friendship, a present for your bride. Nay, it is the custom of friends, you know, always to present to bride and bridegroom some such little marks of their esteem and favoring wishes."

"Julia! I cannot refuse any token of friendship from one like you. I will accept the gift as an omen from Fortune herself."

"Then, after the feast, when the guests retire, you will descend with me to my apartment, and receive it from my hands. Remember!" said Julia, as she joined the wife of Pansa, and left Glaucus to seek Ione.

The widow Fulvia and the spouse of the ædile were engaged in high and grave discussion.

"O Fulvia! I assure you that the last account from Rome declares that the frizzling mode of dressing the hair is growing antiquated; they only now wear it built up in a tower, like Julia's, or arranged as a helmet—the *Galerian* fashion, like mine, you see: it has a fine effect, I think. I assure you, Vespius (Vespius was the name of the Herculaneum hero) admires it greatly."

"And nobody wears the hair like yon Neapolitan, in the Greek way?"

"What, parted in front, with the knot behind? Oh no; how ridiculous it is! it reminds one of the statue of Diana! Yet this Ione is handsome, eh?"

"So the men say; but then she is rich: she is to marry the Athenian—I wish her joy. He will not be long faithful, I suspect; those foreigners are very faithless."

"Ho, Julia!" said Fulvia, as the merchant's daughter joined them, "have you seen the tiger yet?"

"No!"

"Why all the ladies have been to see him. He is so handsome!"

"I hope we shall find some criminal or other for him and the lion," replied Julia. "Your husband (turning to Pansa's wife) is not so active as he should be in this matter."

"Why, really, the laws are too mild," replied the dame of the helmet. "There are so few offences to which the punishment of the arena can be awarded; and then, too, the gladiators are growing effeminate! The stoutest bestiarii declare they are willing enough to fight a boar or a bull; but as for a lion or a tiger, they think the game too much in earnest."

"They are worthy of a mitre," * replied Julia in disdain.

"Oh! have you seen the new house of Fulvius, the dear poet?" said Pansa's wife.

"No; is it handsome?"

"Very!—such good taste. But they say, my dear, that he has such improper pictures! He won't show them to the women: how ill-bred!"

"Those poets are always odd," said the widow. "But he is an interesting man; what pretty verses he writes! We improve very much in poetry; it is impossible to read the old stuff now."

"I declare I am of your opinion," returned the lady of the helmet. "There is so much more force and energy in the modern school."

The warrior sauntered up to the ladies.

"It reconciles me to peace," said he, "when I see such faces."

"Oh! you heroes are ever flatterers," returned Fulvia, hastening to appropriate the compliment specially to herself.

"By this chain, which I received from the emperor's own hand," replied the warrior, playing with a short chain which hung round the neck like a collar, instead of descending to the breast, according to the fashion of the peaceful—"By this chain, you wrong me! I am a blunt man—a soldier should be so."

"How do you find the ladies of Pompeii generally?" said Julia.

"By Venus, most beautiful! They favor me a little, it is true, and that inclines my eyes to double their charms."

"We love a warrior," said the wife of Pansa.

"I see it: by Hercules! it is even disagreeable to be too celebrated in these cities. At Herculaneum they climb the roof of my atrium to catch a glimpse of me through the compluvium; the admiration of one's citizens is pleasant at first, but burthensome afterwards."

* Mitres were worn sometimes by men, and considered a great mark of effeminacy.

"True, true, O Vespius!" cried the poet, joining the group: "I find it so myself."

"You!" said the stately warrior, scanning the small form of the poet with ineffable disdain. "In what legion have *you* served?"

"You may see my spoils, my exuviæ, in the forum itself," returned the poet, with a significant glance at the women. "I have been among the tent-companions, the *contubernales*, of the great Mantuan himself."

"I know no general from Mantua," said the warrior, gravely. "What campaign have you served?"

"That of Helicon."

"I never heard of it."

"Nay, Vespius, he does but joke," said Julia, laughing.

"Joke! By Mars, am I a man to be joked?"

"Yes; Mars himself was in love with the mother of jokes," said the poet, a little alarmed. "Know then, O Vespius! that I am the poet Fulvius. It is I who make warriors immortal!"

"The gods forbid!" whispered Sallust to Julia. "If Vespius were made immortal, what a specimen of tiresome braggadocio would be transmitted to posterity!"

The soldier looked puzzled; when, to the infinite relief of himself and his companions, the signal for the feast was given.

As we have already witnessed at the house of Glaucus the ordinary routine of a Pompeian entertainment, the reader is spared any second detail of the courses, and the manner in which they were introduced.

Diomed, who was rather ceremonious, had appointed a nomenclator, or appointer of places, to each guest.

The reader understands that the festive board was composed of three tables; one at the centre, and one at each wing. It was only at the outer side of these tables that the guests reclined; the inner space was left untenanted, for the greater convenience of the waiters or ministri. The extreme corner of one of the wings was appropriated to Julia as the lady of the feast; that next her, to Diomed. At one corner of the centre table was placed the ædile; at the opposite corner, the Roman senator—these were the posts of honor. The other guests were arranged, so that the young (gentleman or lady) should sit next each other, and the more advanced in years be similarly matched. An agreeable provision enough, but one which must often have offended those who wished to be thought still young.

The chair of Ione was next to the couch of Glaucus.* The seats were veneered with tortoise-shell, and covered with quilts stuffed with feathers, and ornamented with costly embroideries. The modern ornaments of epergne or plateau were supplied by images of the gods, wrought in bronze, ivory, and silver. The sacred salt-cellar and the familiar Lares were not forgotten. Over the table and the seats, a rich canopy was suspended from the ceiling. At each corner of the table were lofty candelabras—for though it was early noon, the room was darkened—while from tripods, placed in different parts of the room, distilled the odor of myrrh and frankincense; and upon the abacus, or sideboard, large vases and various ornaments of silver were ranged, much with the same ostentation (but with more than the same taste) that we find displayed at a modern feast.

The custom of grace was invariably supplied by that of libations to the gods; and Vesta, as queen of the household gods, usually received first that graceful homage.

This ceremony being performed, the slaves showered flowers upon the couches and the floor, and crowned each guest with rosy garlands, intricately woven with ribands, tied by the rind of the linden-tree, and each intermingled with the ivy and the amethyst—supposed preventives against the effect of wine; the wreaths of the women only were exempted from these leaves, for it was not the fashion for them to drink wine *in public*. It was then that the president Diomed thought it advisable to institute a *basileus*, or director of the feast—an important office, sometimes chosen by lot; sometimes, as now, by the master of the entertainment.

Diomed was not a little puzzled as to his election. The invalid senator was too grave and too infirm for the proper fulfilment of

* In formal parties the women sat in chairs,—the men reclined. It was only in the bosom of families that the same ease was granted to both sexes—the reason is obvious.

his duty; the ædile Pansa was adequate enough to the task; but then, to choose the next in official rank to the senator, was an affront to the senator himself. While deliberating between the merits of the others, he caught the mirthful glance of Sallust, and, by a sudden inspiration, named the jovial epicure to the rank of director, or *arbiter bibendi*.

Sallust received the appointment with becoming humility.

"I shall be a merciful king," said he, "to those who drink deep; to a recusant, Minos himself shall be less inexorable. Beware!"

The slaves handed round basins of perfumed water, by which lavation the feast commenced: and now the table groaned under the initiatory course.

The conversation, at first desultory and scattered, allowed Ione and Glaucus to carry on those sweet whispers, which are worth all the eloquence in the world. Julia watched them with flashing eyes.

"How soon shall her place be mine!" thought she.

But Clodius, who sat in the centre table, so as to observe well the countenance of Julia, guessed her pique, and resolved to profit by it. He addressed her across the table in set phrases of gallantry; and as he was of high birth and of a showy person, the vain Julia was not so much in love as to be insensible to his attentions.

The slaves, in the interim, were constantly kept upon the alert by the vigilant Sallust, who chased one cup by another with a celerity which seemed as if he were resolved upon exhausting those capacious cellars which the reader may yet see beneath the house of Diomed. The worthy merchant began to repent his choice, as amphora after amphora was pierced and emptied. The slaves, all under the age of manhood (the youngest being about ten years old,—it was they who filled the wine,—the eldest, some five years older, mingled it with water), seemed to share in the zeal of Sallust; and the face of Diomed began to glow as he watched the provoking complacency with which they seconded the exertions of the king of the feast.

"Pardon me, O senator!" said Sallust; "I see you flinch; your purple hem cannot save you—drink!"

"By the gods!" said the senator, coughing, "my lungs are already on fire; you proceed with so miraculous a swiftness, that Phaeton himself was nothing to you. I am infirm, O pleasant Sallust: you must exonerate me."

"Not I, by Vesta! I am an impartial monarch—drink!"

The poor senator, compelled by the laws of the table, was forced to comply. Alas! every cup was bringing him nearer and nearer to the Stygian pool.

"Gently! gently! my king," groaned Diomed; "we already begin to——"

"Treason!" interrupted Sallust; "no stern Brutus here!—no interference with royalty!"

"But our female guests——"

"Love a toper! Did not Ariadne dote upon Bacchus?"

The feast proceeded; the guests grew more talkative and noisy; the desert or last course was already on the table; and the slaves bore round water with myrrh and hyssop for the finishing lavation. At the same time, a small circular table that had been placed in the space opposite the guests, suddenly, and as by magic, seemed to open in the centre, and cast up a fragrant shower, sprinkling the table and the guests; while as it ceased the awning above them was drawn aside, and the guests perceived that a rope had been stretched across the ceiling, and that one of those nimble dancers for which Pompeii was so celebrated, and whose descendants add so charming a grace to the festivities of Astley's or Vauxhall, was now treading his airy measures right over their heads.

This apparition, removed but by a cord from one's pericranium, and indulging the most vehement leaps, apparently with the intention of alighting upon that cerebral region, would probably be regarded with some terror by a party in May-fair; but our Pompeian revellers seemed to behold the spectacle with delighted cusiosity, and applauded in proportion as the dancer appeared with the most difficulty to miss falling upon the head of whatever guest he particularly selected to dance above. He paid the senator, indeed, the peculiar compliment of literally falling from the rope, and catching

it again with his hand, just as the whole party imagined the skull of the Roman was as much fractured as ever that of the poet whom the eagle took for a tortoise. At length, to the great relief of at least Ione, who had not much accustomed herself to this entertainment, the dancer suddenly paused as a strain of music was heard from without. He danced again still more wildly; the air changed, the dancer paused again; no, it could not dissolve the charm which was supposed to possess him! He represented one who by a strange disorder is compelled to dance, and whom only a certain air of music can cure.* At length the musician seemed to hit on the right tune; the dancer gave one leap, swung himself down from the rope, alighted on the floor, and vanished.

One art now yielded to another; and the musicians who were stationed without on the terrace struck up a soft and mellow air, to which were sung the following words, made almost indistinct by the barrier between, and the exceeding lowness of the minstrelsy:—

FESTIVE MUSIC SHOULD BE LOW.

I.

"Hark! through these flowers our music sends its greeting
To your loved halls, where Psilas † shuns the day;
When the young god his Cretan nymph was meeting,
He taught Pan's rustic pipe this gliding lay.
Soft as the dews of wine
Shed in this banquet-hour,
The rich libation of Sound's stream divine,
O reverent harp, to Aphrodite pour!

II.

Wild rings the trump o'er ranks to glory marching;
Music's sublimer bursts for war are meet;
But sweet lips murmuring under wreaths o'erarching,
Find the low whispers like their own most sweet.
Steal, my lull'd music, steal,
Like woman's half-heard tone,
So that whoe'er shall hear, shall think to feel
In thee the voice of lips that love his own."

At the end of that song Ione's cheek blushed more deeply than before, and Glaucus had contrived, under cover of the table, to steal her hand.

"It is a pretty song," said Fulvius, patronizingly.

"Ah! if *you* would oblige us!" murmured the wife of Pansa.

"Do you wish Fulvius to sing?" asked the king of the feast, who had just called on the assembly to drink the health of the Roman senator, a cup to each letter of his name.

"Can you ask?" said the matron, with a complimentary glance at the poet.

Sallust snapped his fingers, and whispering the slave who came to learn his orders, the latter disappeared, and returned in a few moments with a small harp in one hand and a branch of myrtle in the other.

The slave approached the poet, and with a low reverence presented to him the harp.

"Alas! I cannot play," said the poet.

"Then you must sing to the myrtle. It is a Greek fashion: Diomed loves the Greeks—I love the Greeks—you love the Greeks—we all love the Greeks—and between you and me this is not the only thing we have stolen from them. However, I introduce this custom—I, the king—sing, subject, sing!"

The poet, with a bashful smile, took the myrtle in his hands, and after a short prelude sang as follows, in a pleasant and well-tuned voice:—

THE CORONATION OF THE LOVES.*

I.

"The merry Loves one holyday
Were all at gambols madly;
But Loves too long can seldom play
Without behaving sadly.
They laugh'd, they toy'd, they romp'd about,
And then for change they all fell out.
Fie, fie! how can they quarrel so?
My Lesbia—ah, for shame, love!
Methinks 't is scarce an hour ago
When we did just the same, love.

II.

The Loves, 't is thought, were free till then,
They had no king or laws, dear;
But gods, like men, should subject be,
Say all the ancient saws, dear,
And so our crew resolved, for quiet,
To choose a king to curb their riot.
A kiss: ah! what a grievous thing
For both, methinks, 't would be, child,
If I should take some prudish king,
And cease to be so free, child!

* A dance still retained in Campania.
† Bacchus.

* Suggested by two Pompeian pictures in the Museum at Naples, which represent a dove and a helmet enthroned by Cupids.

III.

Among their toys a Casque they found,
It was the helm of Ares;
With horrent plumes the crest was crown'd,
It frightened all the Lares.
So fine a king was never known—
They placed the Helmet on the throne.
My girl, since Valor wins the world,
They chose a mighty master;
But thy sweet flag of smiles unfurl'd,
Would win the world much faster!

IV.

The Casque soon found the Loves too wild
A troop for him to school them;
For warriors know how *one* such child
Has aye contrived to fool them.
They plagued him so, that in despair
He took a wife the plague to share.
If kings themselves thus find the strife
Of earth, unshared, severe, girl;
Why just to halve the ills of life,
Come, take your partner here, girl.

V.

Within that room the Bird of Love
The whole affair had eyed then;
The monarch hail'd the royal dove,
And placed her by his side then:
What mirth amidst the Loves was seen!
'Long live,' they cried, 'our King and Queen!'
Ah! Lesbia, would that thrones were mine,
And crowns to deck that brow, love
And yet I know that heart of thine
For me is throne enow, love!

VI.

The urchins hoped to tease the mate
As they had teased the hero;
But when the Dove in judgment sate
They found her worse than Nero!
Each look a frown, each word a law,
The little subjects shook with awe.
In thee I find the same deceit;—
Too late, alas! a learner!
For where a mien more gently sweet?
And where a tyrant sterner?"

This song, which greatly suited the gay and lively fancy of the Pompeians, was received with considerable applause, and the widow insisted on crowning her namesake with the very branch of myrtle to which he had sung. It was easily twisted into a garland, and the immortal Fulvius was crowned amidst the clapping of hands and shouts of *Io triumphe!* The song and the harp now circulated round the party, a new myrtle branch being handed about, stopping at each person who could be prevailed upon to sing.*

The sun began now to decline, though the revellers, who had worn away several hours, perceived it not in their darkened chamber; and the senator, who was tired, and the warrior, who had to return to Herculaneum, rising to depart, gave the signal for the general dispersion. "Tarry yet a moment, my friends," said Diomed; "if you will go so soon, you must at least take a share in our concluding game."

So saying, he motioned to one of the ministri, and whispering him, the slave went out and presently returned with a small bowl containing various tablets carefully sealed, and, apparently, exactly similar. Each guest was to purchase one of these at the nominal price of the lowest piece of silver: and the sport of this lottery (which was the favorite diversion of Augustus, who introduced it) consisted in the inequality, and sometimes the incongruity, of the prizes; the nature and amount of which were specified within the tablets. For instance, the poet, with a wry face, drew one of his own poems (no physician ever less willingly swallowed his own draught); the warrior drew a case of bodkins, which gave rise to certain novel witticisms relative to Hercules and the distaff; the widow Fulvia obtained a large drinking-cup; Julia, a gentleman's buckle; and Lepidus, a lady's patch-box. The most appropriate lot was drawn by the gambler Clodius, who reddened with anger on being presented to a set of cogged dice.* A certain damp was thrown upon the gaiety which these various lots created by an accident that was considered ominous; Glaucus drew the most valuable of all the prizes, a small marble statue of Fortune, of Grecian workmanship: on handing it to him the slave suffered it to drop, and it broke in pieces.

A shiver went round the assembly, and each voice cried spontaneously on the gods to avert the omen.

Glaucus alone, though perhaps as superstitious as the rest, affected to be unmoved.

"Sweet Neapolitan," whispered he ten-

* According to Plutarch (*Sympos.* lib. i.) it seems that the branch of myrtle or laurel was not carried round in order, but passed from the first person on one couch to the first on another, and then from the second on the one to the second on the other, and so on.

* Several cogged dice were found in Pompeii. Some of the virtues may be modern, but it is quite clear that all the vices are ancient.

derly to Ione, who had turned pale as the broken marble itself, "I *accept* the omen. It signifies, that in obtaining thee Fortune can give no more,—she breaks *her* image when she blesses me with *thine*."

In order to divert the impression which this incident had occasioned in an assembly which, considering the civilization of the guests, would seem miraculously superstitious, if at the present day in a country party we did not often see a lady grow hypochondriacal on leaving a room last of thirteen, Sallust, now crowning his cup with flowers, gave the health of their host. This was followed by a similar compliment to the emperor; and then, with a parting cup to Mercury to send them pleasant slumbers, they concluded the entertainment by a last libation, and broke up the party.

Carriages and litters were little used in Pompeii, partly owing to the extreme narrowness of the streets, partly to the convenient smallness of the city. Most of the guests, replacing their sandals, which they had put off in the banquet-room, and induing their cloaks, left the house on foot, attended by their slaves.

Meanwhile, having seen Ione depart, Glaucus, turning to the staircase which led down to the rooms of Julia, was conducted by a slave to an apartment in which he found the merchant's daughter already seated.

"Glaucus!" said she, looking down, "I see that you really love Ione—she is indeed beautiful."

"Julia is charming enough to be generous," replied the Greek. "Yes, I love Ione; amidst all the youth who court you, may you have one worshipper as sincere!"

"I pray the gods to grant it! See, Glaucus, these pearls are the present I destine to your bride: may Juno give her health to wear them!"

So saying, she placed a case in his hand, containing a row of pearls of some size and price. It was so much the custom for persons about to be married to receive these gifts, that Glaucus could have little scruple in accepting the necklace, though the gallant and proud Athenian inly resolved to requite the gift by one of thrice its value. Julia then, stopping short his thanks, poured forth some wine into a small bowl.

"You have drunk many toasts with my father," said she, smiling,—"one now with me. Health and fortune to your bride!"

She touched the cup with her lips, and then presented it to Glaucus. The customary etiquette required that Glaucus should drain the whole contents; he accordingly did so. Julia, unknowing the deceit which Nydia had practised upon her, watched him with sparkling eyes; although the witch had told her that the effect *might* not be immediate, she yet sanguinely trusted to an expeditious operation in favor of her charms. She was disappointed when she found Glaucus coldly replace the cup, and converse with her in the same unmoved but gentle tone as before. And though she detained him as long as she decorously could do, no change took place in his manner.

"But to-morrow," thought she, exultingly recovering her disappointment,—"to-morrow, alas, for Glaucus!"

Alas, for him, indeed!

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY HALTS FOR A MOMENT AT AN EPISODE.

Restless and anxious, Apæcides consumed the day in wandering through the most sequestered walks in the vicinity of the city. The sun was slowly setting as he paused beside a lonely part of the Sarnus, ere yet it wound amidst the evidences of luxury and power. Only through openings in the woods and vines were caught glimpses of the white and gleaming city, in which was heard in the distance no din, no sound, nor "busiest hum of men." Amidst the green banks crept the lizard and the grasshopper, and here and there in the brake some solitary bird burst into sudden song, as suddenly stilled. There was deep calm around, but not the calm of night; the air still breathed of the freshness and life of day; the grass still moved to the stir of the insect horde; and on the opposite bank the graceful and white capella passed browsing through the herbage, and paused at the wave to drink.

As Apæcides stood musingly gazing upon

the waters, he heard beside him the low bark of a dog.

"Be still, poor friend," said a voice at hand; "the stranger's step harms not thy master." The convert recognized the voice, and, turning, he beheld the old mysterious man whom he had seen in the congregation of the Nazarenes.

The old man was sitting upon a fragment of stone covered with ancient mosses; beside him were his staff and scrip; at his feet lay a small shaggy dog, the companion in how many a pilgrimage perilous and strange.

The face of the old man was as balm to the excited spirit of the neophyte; he approached, and craving his blessing sat down beside him.

"Thou art provided as for a journey, father," said he: "wilt thou leave us yet?"

"My son," replied the old man, "the days in store for me on earth are few and scanty; I employ them as becomes me, travelling from place to place, comforting those whom God has gathered together in His name, and proclaiming the glory of His Son, as testified to His servant."

"Thou hast looked, they tell me, on the face of Christ?"

"And the face revived me from the dead. Know, young proselyte to the true faith, that I am he of whom thou readest in the scroll of the Apostle. In the far Judea, and in the city of Nain, there dwelt a widow, humble of spirit and sad of heart; for of all the ties of life one son alone was spared to her. And she loved him with a melancholy love, for he was the likeness of the lost. And the son died. The reed on which she leaned was broken, the oil was dried up in the widow's cruse. They bore the dead upon his bier; and near the gate of the city, where the crowd were gathered, there came a silence over the sounds of woe, for the Son of God was passing by. The mother, who followed the bier, wept,—not noisily, but all who looked upon her saw that her heart was crushed. And the Lord pitied her, and He touched the bier, and said, 'I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE.' And the dead man woke and looked upon the face of the Lord. Oh, that calm and solemn brow, that unutterable smile, that careworn and sorrowful face, lighted up with a God's benignity—it chased away the shadows of the grave! I rose, I spoke, I was living and in my mother's arms—yes, *I* am the dead revived! The people shouted, the funeral horns rang forth merrily: there was a cry, 'God has visited His people!' I heard them not—I felt—I saw—nothing—but the face of the Redeemer!"

The old man paused, deeply moved; and the youth felt his blood creep, and his hair stir. He was in the presence of one who had known the Mystery of Death!

"Till that time," renewed the widow's son, "I had been as other men: thoughtless, not abandoned; taking no heed, but of the things of love and life; nay, I had inclined to the gloomy faith of the earthly Sadducee! But, raised from the dead, from awful and desert dreams that these lips never dare reveal—recalled upon earth, to testify the powers of Heaven—once more mortal, the witness of immortality; I drew a new being from the grave. O fated—O lost Jerusalem!—Him from whom came my life, I beheld adjudged to the agonized and parching death!—Far in the mighty crowd, I saw the light rest and glimmer over the cross: I heard the hooting mob, I cried aloud, I raved, I threatened—none heeded me—I was lost in the whirl and the roar of thousands! But even then, in my agony and His own, methought the glazing eye of the Son of Man sought me out—His lip smiled, as when it conquered death—it hushed me, and I became calm. He who had defied the grave for another,—what was the grave to Him? The sun shone aslant the pale and powerful features, and then died away! Darkness fell over the earth; how long it endured, I know not. A loud cry came through the gloom—a sharp and bitter cry!—and all was silent.

"But who shall tell the terrors of the night? I walked along the city—the earth reeled to and fro, and the houses trembled to their base—the living had deserted the streets, but *not the Dead:*—through the gloom I saw them glide—the dim and ghastly shapes, in the cerements of the grave,—with horror, and woe, and warning on their unmoving lips and lightless eyes!—they swept by me, as I passed—they glared upon me—I had been their brother; and they bowed their heads in recognition: they had risen to tell the living that the dead *can* rise!"

Again the old man paused, and, when he resumed, it was in a calmer tone.

"From that night I resigned all earthly thought but that of serving HIM. A preacher and a pilgrim, I have traversed the remotest corners of the earth, proclaiming His Divinity, and bringing new converts to His fold. I come as the wind, and as the wind depart: sowing, as the wind sows, the seeds that enrich the world.

"Son, on earth we shall meet no more. Forget not this hour,—what are the pleasures and the pomps of life? As the lamp shines, so life glitters for an hour; but the soul's light is the star that burns for ever, in the heart of illimitable space."

It was then that their conversation fell upon the general and sublime doctrines of immortality; it soothed and elevated the young mind of the convert, which yet clung to many of the damps and shadows of that cell of faith which he had so lately left—it was the air of heaven breathing on the prisoner released at last. There was a strong and marked distinction between the Christianity of the old man and that of Olinthus; that of the first was more soft, more gentle, more divine. The hard heroism of Olinthus had something in it fierce and intolerant—it was necessary to the part he was destined to play—it had in it more of the courage of the martyr than the charity of the saint. It aroused, it excited, it nerved, rather than subdued and softened. But the whole heart of that divine old man was bathed in love; the smile of the Deity had burned away from it the leaven of earthlier and coarser passions, and left to the energy of the hero all the meekness of the child.

"And now," said he, rising at length, as the sun's last ray died in the west; "now, in the cool of twilight, I pursue my way towards the Imperial Rome. There yet dwell some holy men, who like me have beheld the face of Christ; and them would I see before I die."

"But the night is chill for thine age, my father, and the way is long, and the robber haunts it; rest thee till to-morrow."

"Kind son, what is there in this scrip to tempt the robber? And the Night and the Solitude!—*these* make the ladder round which angels cluster, and beneath which my spirit can dream of God. Oh! none can know what the pilgrim feels as he walks on his holy course; nursing no fear, and dreading no danger—for God is with him! He hears the winds murmur glad tidings; the woods sleep in the shadow of Almighty wings;—the stars are the Scriptures of Heaven, the tokens of love, and the witnesses of immortality. Night is the pilgrim's day." With these words the old man pressed Apæcides to his breast, and taking up his staff and scrip, the dog bounded cheerily before him, and with slow steps and downcast eyes he went his way.

The convert stood watching his bended form, till the trees shut the last glimpse from his view; and then, as the stars broke forth, he woke from the musings with a start, reminded of his appointment with Olinthus.

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILTRE—ITS EFFECT.

WHEN Glaucus arrived at his own home, he found Nydia seated under the portico of his garden. In fact, she had sought his house in the mere chance that he *might* return at an early hour: anxious, fearful, anticipative, she resolved upon seizing the earliest opportunity of availing herself of the love-charm, while at the same time she half hoped the opportunity might be deferred.

It was then, in that fearful burning mood, her heart beating, her cheek flushing, that Nydia awaited the possibility of Glaucus's return before the night. He crossed the portico just as the first stars began to rise, and the heaven above had assumed its most purple robe.

"Ho, my child, wait you for me?"

"Nay, I have been tending the flowers, and did but linger a little while to rest myself."

"It has been warm," said Glaucus, placing himself also on one of the seats beneath the colonnade.

"Very."

"Wilt thou summon Davus? the wine I have drunk heats me, and I long for some cooling drink."

Here at once, suddenly and unexpectedly, the very opportunity that Nydia awaited presented itself; of himself, at his own free choice, he afforded to her that occasion. She breathed quick—"I will prepare for you myself," said she, "the summer draught that Ione loves—of honey and weak wine cooled in snow."

"Thanks," said the unconscious Glaucus. "If Ione love it, enough; it would be grateful were it poison."

Nydia frowned, and then smiled; she withdrew for a few moments, and returned with the cup containing the beverage. Glaucus took it from her hand. What would not Nydia have given then for one hour's prerogative of sight, to have watched her hopes ripening to effect;—to have seen the first dawn of the imagined love;—to have worshipped with more than Persian adoration the rising of that sun which her credulous soul believed was to break upon her dreary night! Far different, as she stood then and there, were the thoughts, the emotions of the blind girl, from those of the vain Pompeian under a similar suspense. In the last, what poor and frivolous passions had made up the daring whole! What petty pique, what small revenge, what expectation of a paltry triumph, had swelled the attributes of that sentiment she dignified with the name of love! but in the wild heart of the Thessalian all was pure, uncontrolled, unmodified passion;—erring, unwomanly, frenzied, but debased by no elements of a more sordid feeling. Filled with love as with life itself, how could she resist the occasion of winning love in return!

She leaned for support against the wall, and her face, before so flushed, was now white as snow, and with her delicate hands clasped convulsively together, her lips apart, her eyes on the ground, she waited the next words Glaucus should utter.

Glaucus had raised the cup to his lips, he had already drained about a fourth of its contents, when his eye suddenly glancing upon the face of Nydia, he was so forcibly struck by its alteration, by its intense, and painful, and strange expression, that he paused abruptly, and still holding the cup near his lips, exclaimed—

"Why, Nydia! Nydia! I say, art thou ill or in pain? Nay, thy face speaks for thee. What ails my poor child?" As he spoke, he put down the cup and rose from his seat to approach her, when a sudden pang shot coldly to his heart, and was followed by a wild, confused, dizzy sensation at the brain. The floor seemed to glide from under him—his feet seemed to move on air—a mighty and unearthly gladness rushed upon his spirit—he felt too buoyant for the earth—he longed for wings, nay, it seemed, in the buoyancy of his new existence, as *if* he possessed them. He burst involuntarily into a loud and thrilling laugh. He clapped his hands—he bounded aloft—he was as a Pythoness inspired; suddenly as it came this preternatural transport passed, though only partially, away. He now felt his blood rushing loudly and rapidly through his veins; it seemed to swell, to exult, to leap along, as a stream that has burst its bounds, and hurries to the ocean. It throbbed in his ear with a mighty sound, he felt it mount to his brow, he felt the veins in the temples stretch and swell as if they could no longer contain the violent and increasing tide—then a kind of darkness fell over his eyes—darkness, but not entire; for through the dim shade he saw the opposite walls glow out, and the figures painted thereon seemed, ghost-like, to creep and glide. What was most strange, he did not feel himself *ill*—he did not sink or quail beneath the dread frenzy that was gathering over him. The novelty of the feelings seemed bright and vivid—he felt as if a younger health had been infused into his frame. He was gliding on to madness,—and he knew it not!

Nydia had not answered his first question—she had not been able to reply—his wild and fearful laugh had roused her from her passionate suspense: she could not see his fierce gesture—she could not mark his reeling and unsteady step as he paced unconsciously to and fro; but she heard the words, broken, incoherent, insane, that gushed from his lips. She became terrified and appalled—she hastened to him, feeling with her arms until she touched his knees, and then falling on the ground she embraced them, weeping with terror and excitement.

"Oh, speak to me! speak! you do not hate me?—speak, speak!"

"By the bright goddess, a beautiful land

this Cyprus! Ho! how they fill us with wine instead of blood! now they open the veins of the Faun yonder, to show how the tide within bubbles and sparkles. Come hither, jolly old god! thou ridest on a goat, eh?—what long silky hair he has! He is worth all the coursers of Parthia. But a word with thee—this wine of thine is too strong for us mortals. Oh! beautiful! the boughs are at rest! the green waves of the forest have caught the Zephyr and drowned him! Not a breath stirs the leaves—and I view the Dreams sleeping with folded wings upon the motionless elm; and I look beyond, and I see a blue stream sparkle in the silent noon; a fountain—a fountain springing aloft! Ah! my fount, thou wilt not put out the rays of my Grecian sun, though thou triest ever so hard with thy nimble and silver arms. And now, what form steals yonder through the boughs? she glides like a moonbeam!—she has a garland of oak-leaves on her head. In her hand is a vase upturned, from which she pours pink and tiny shells, and sparkling water. Oh! look on yon face! Man never before saw its like. See! we are alone; only I and she in the wide forest. There is no smile upon her lips—she moves, grave and sweetly sad. Ha! fly, it is a nymph!—it is one of the wild Napææ!* Whoever sees her becomes mad—fly! see, she discovers me!"

"Oh! Glaucus! Glaucus! do you not know me? Rave not so wildly, or thou wilt kill me with a word!"

A new change seemed now to operate upon the jarring and disordered mind of the unfortunate Athenian. He put his hands upon Nydia's silken hair; he smoothed the locks—he looked wistfully upon her face, and then, as in the broken chain of thought one or two links were yet unsevered, it seemed that her countenance brought its associations of Ione; and with that remembrance his madness became yet more powerful, and it was swayed and tinged by passion, as he burst forth,—

"I swear by Venus, by Diana, and by Juno, that though I have now the world on my shoulders, as my countryman Hercules (ah, dull Rome! whoever was truly great was of Greece; why, you would be godless if it were not for us!)—I say, as my countryman Hercules had before me, I would let it fall into chaos for one smile from Ione. Ah, Beautiful,—Adored," he added, in a voice inexpressibly fond and plaintive, "thou lovest me not. Thou art unkind to me. The Egyptian hath belied me to thee—thou knowest not what hours I have spent beneath thy casement—thou knowest not how I have outwatched the stars, thinking thou, my sun, wouldst rise at last,—and thou lovest me not, thou forsakest me! Oh! do not leave me now! I feel that my life will not be long, let me gaze on thee at least unto the last. I am of the bright land of thy fathers—I have trod the heights of Phyle—I have gathered the hyacinth and rose amidst the olive groves of Ilyssus. *Thou* shouldest not desert me, for thy fathers were brothers to my own. And they say this land is lovely, and these climes serene, but I will bear thee with me—Ho! dark form, why risest thou like a cloud between me and mine? Death sits calmly dread upon thy brow—on thy lip is the smile that slays: thy name is Orcus, but on earth men call thee Arbaces. See, I know thee! fly, dim shadow, thy spells avail not!"

"Glaucus! Glaucus!" murmured Nydia, releasing her hold, and falling, beneath the excitement of her dismay, remorse, and anguish, insensible on the floor.

"Who calls?" said he, in a loud voice. "Ione! it is she! they have borne her off—we will save her—where is my stilus? Ha, I have it! I come, Ione, to thy rescue! I come! I come!"

So saying, the Athenian with one bound passed the portico, he traversed the house, and rushed with swift but vacillating steps, and muttering audibly to himself, down the star-lit streets. The direful potion burnt like fire in his veins, for its effect was made, perhaps, still more sudden from the wine he had drunk previously. Used to the excesses of nocturnal revellers, the citizens, with smiles and winks, gave way to his reeling steps; they naturally imagined him under the influence of the Bromian god, not vainly worshipped at Pompeii; but they who looked twice upon his face started in a nameless fear, and the smile withered from their lips. He passed the more populous streets; and,

* Presiding over hills and woods.

pursuing mechanically the way to Ione's house, he traversed a more deserted quarter, and entered now the lonely grove of Cybele, in which Apæcides had held his interview with Olinthus.

CHAPTER VI.

A REUNION OF DIFFERENT ACTORS.—STREAMS THAT FLOWED APPARENTLY APART RUSH INTO ONE GULF.

IMPATIENT to learn whether the fell drug had yet been administered by Julia to his hated rival, and with what effect, Arbaces resolved, as the evening came on, to seek her house, and satisfy his suspense. It was customary, as I have before said, for men at that time to carry abroad with them the tablets and the stilus attached to their girdle; and with the girdle they were put off when at home. In fact, under the appearance of a literary instrument, the Romans carried about with them in that same stilus a very sharp and formidable weapon. It was with his stilus* that Cassius stabbed Cæsar in the senate-house. Taking, then, his girdle and his cloak, Arbaces left his house, supporting his steps, which were still somewhat feeble (though hope and vengeance had conspired greatly with his own medical science, which was profound, to restore his natural strength), by his long staff: Arbaces took his way to the villa of Diomed.

And beautiful is the moonlight of the south! In those climes the night so quickly glides into the day, that twilight scarcely makes a bridge between them. One moment of darker purple in the sky—of a thousand rosehues in the water—of shade half victorious over light; and then burst forth at once the countless stars—the moon is up—Night has resumed her reign!

Brightly then, and softly bright, fell the moonbeams over the antique grove consecrated to Cybele—the stately trees, whose date went beyond tradition, cast their long shadows over the soil, while through the openings in their boughs the stars shone, still and frequent. The whiteness of the small sacellum in the centre of the grove, amidst the dark foliage, had in it something abrupt and startling; it recalled at once the purpose to which the wood was consecrated, —its holiness and solemnity.

With a swift and stealthy pace, Calenus, gliding under the shade of the trees, reached the chapel, and gently putting back the boughs that completely closed around its rear, settled himself in his concealment; a concealment so complete, what with the fane in front and the trees behind, that no unsuspicious passenger could possibly have detected him. Again, all was apparently solitary in the grove; afar off you heard faintly the voices of some noisy revellers, or the music that played cheerily to the groups that then, as now in those climates, during the nights of summer, lingered in the streets, and enjoyed, in the fresh air and the liquid moonlight, a milder day.

From the height on which the grove was placed, you saw through the intervals of the trees the broad and purple sea, rippling in the distance, the white villas of Stabiæ in the curving shore, and the dim Lectiarian hills mingling with the delicious sky. Presently the tall figure of Arbaces, in his way to the house of Diomed, entered the extreme end of the grove; and at the same instant Apæcides, also bound to his appointment with Olinthus, crossed the Egyptian's path.

"Hem! Apæcides," said Arbaces, recognizing the priest at a glance; "when last we met, you were my foe. I have wished since then to see you, for I would have you still my pupil and my friend."

Apæcides started at the voice of the Egyptian; and halting abruptly, gazed upon him with a countenance full of contending, bitter, and scornful emotions.

"Villain and impostor!" said he at length; "thou hast recovered then from the jaws of the grave! But think not again to weave around me thy guilty meshes.—*Retiarius*, I am armed against thee!"

"Hush!" said Arbaces, in a very low voice—but his pride, which in that descendant of kings was great, betrayed the wound it received from the insulting epithets of the priest, in the quiver of his lip and the flush of his tawny brow. "Hush! more low!

* From this stilus may be derived the stiletto of the Italians.

thou mayest be overheard, and if other ears than mine had drunk those sounds—why——"

"Dost thou threaten?—what if the whole city had heard me?"

"The manes of my ancestors would not have suffered me to forgive thee. But, hold, and hear me. Thou art enraged that I would have offered violence to thy sister.—Nay, peace, peace! but one instant, I pray thee. Thou art right; it was the frenzy of passion and of jealousy—I have repented bitterly of my madness. Forgive me; I, who never implored pardon of living man, beseech thee now to forgive me. Nay, I will atone the insult—I ask thy sister in marriage;—start not, consider,—what is the alliance of yon holiday Greek compared to mine? Wealth unbounded—birth that in its far antiquity leaves your Greek and Roman names the things of yesterday—science—but that thou knowest! Give me thy sister, and my whole life shall atone a moment's error."

"Egyptian, were even I to consent, my sister loathes the very air thou breathest: but I have my own wrongs to forgive—I may pardon thee that thou hast made me a tool to thy deceits, but never that thou hast seduced me to become the abettor of thy vices—a polluted and a perjured man. Tremble!—even now I prepare the hour in which thou and thy false gods shall be unveiled. Thy lewd and Circèan life shall be dragged to day—thy mumming oracles disclosed—the fane of the idol Isis shall be a by-word and a scorn—the name of Arbaces a mark for the hisses of execration! Tremble!"

The flush on the Egyptian's brow was succeeded by a livid paleness. He looked behind, before, around, to feel assured that none was by; and then he fixed his dark and dilating eye on the priest, with such a gaze of wrath and menace, that one, perhaps, less supported than Apæcides by the fervent daring of a divine zeal, could not have faced with unflinching look that lowering aspect. As it was, however, the young convert met it unmoved, and returned it with an eye of proud defiance.

"Apæcides," said the Egyptian, in a tremulous and inward tone, "beware! What is it thou wouldst meditate? Speakest thou—reflect, pause, before thou repliest—from the hasty influences of wrath, as yet divining no settled purpose, or from some fixed design?"

"I speak from the inspiration of the True God, whose servant I now am," answered the Christian, boldly; "and in the knowledge that by His grace human courage has already fixed the date of thy hypocrisy and thy demon's worship: ere thrice the sun has dawned, thou wilt know all! Dark sorcerer, tremble, and farewell!"

All the fierce and lurid passions which he inherited from his nation and his clime, at all times but ill concealed beneath the blandness of craft and the coldness of philosophy, were released in the breast of the Egyptian. Rapidly one thought chased another; he saw before him an obstinate barrier to even a lawful alliance with Ione—the fellow-champion of Glaucus in the struggle which had baffled his designs—the reviler of his name—the threatened desecrator of the goddess he served while he disbelieved—the avowed and approaching revealer of his own impostures and vices. His love, his repute, nay, his very life, might be in danger—the day and hour seemed even to have been fixed for some design against him. He knew by the words of the convert that Apæcides had adopted the Christian faith; he knew the indomitable zeal which led on the proselytes of that creed. Such was his enemy; he grasped his stilus,—that enemy was in his power! They were now before the chapel; one hasty glance once more he cast around; he saw none near,—silence and solitude alike tempted him.

"Die, then, in thy rashness!" he muttered; "away, obstacle to my rushing fates!"

And just as the young Christian had turned to depart, Arbaces raised his hand high over the left shoulder of Apæcides, and plunged his sharp weapon twice into his breast.

Apæcides fell to the ground pierced to the heart,—he fell mute, without even a groan, at the very base of the sacred chapel.

Arbaces gazed upon him for a moment with the fierce animal joy of conquest over a foe. But presently the full sense of the danger to which he was exposed flashed up-

on him; he wiped his weapon carefully in the long grass, and with the very garments of his victim; drew his cloak round him, and was about to depart, when he saw, coming up the path, right before him, the figure of a young man, whose steps reeled and vacillated strangely as he advanced: the quiet moonlight streamed full upon his face, which seemed, by the whitening ray, colorless as marble. The Egyptian recognized the face and form of Glaucus. The unfortunate and benighted Greek was chanting a disconnected and mad song, composed from snatches of hymns and sacred odes, all jarringly woven together.

"Ha!" thought the Egyptian, instantaneously divining his state and its terrible cause; "so, then, the hell-draught works, and destiny hath sent thee hither to crush two of my foes at once!"

Quickly, even ere this thought occurred to him, he had withdrawn on one side of the chapel, and concealed himself amongst the boughs; from that lurking place he watched, as a tiger in his lair, the advance of his second victim. He noted the wandering and restless fire in the bright and beautiful eyes of the Athenian; the convulsions that distorted his statue-like features, and writhed his hueless lip. He saw that the Greek was utterly deprived of reason. Nevertheless, as Glaucus came up to the dead body of Apæcides, from which the dark red stream flowed slowly over the grass, so strange and ghastly a spectacle could not fail to arrest him, benighted and erring as was his glimmering sense. He paused, placed his hand to his brow, as if to collect himself, and then saying,—

"What, ho! Endymion, sleepest thou so soundly? What has the moon said to thee? Thou makest me jealous; it is time to wake,"—he stooped down with the intention of lifting up the body.

Forgetting—feeling not—his own debility, the Egyptian sprung from his hiding-place, and, as the Greek bent, struck him forcibly to the ground, over the very body of the Christian; then, raising his powerful voice to its loudest pitch, he shouted,—

"Ho, citizens,—ho! help me!—run hither—hither!—A murder—a murder before your very fane! Help, or the murderer escapes!"

As he spoke, he placed his foot on the breast of Glaucus: an idle and superfluous precaution; for the potion operating with the fall, the Greek lay there motionless and insensible, save that now and then his lips gave vent to some vague and raving sounds.

As he there stood awaiting the coming of those his voice still continued to summon, perhaps some remorse, some compunctious visitings — for despite his crimes he was human—haunted the breast of the Egyptian; the defenceless state of Glaucus—his wandering words—his shattered reason, smote him even more than the death of Apæcides, and he said, half audibly, to himself,—

"Poor clay!—poor human reason! *where is the soul now?* I could spare thee, O my rival—rival never more! But destiny must be obeyed—my safety demands thy sacrifice." With that, as if to drown compunction, he shouted yet more loudly; and drawing from the girdle of Glaucus the stilus it contained, he steeped it in the blood of the murdered man, and laid it beside the corpse.

And now, fast and breathless, several of the citizens came thronging to the place, some with torches, which the moon rendered unnecessary, but which flared red and tremulously against the darkness of the trees: they surrounded the spot.

"Lift up yon corpse," said the Egyptian, "and guard well the murderer."

They raised the body, and great was their horror and sacred indignation to discover in that lifeless clay a priest of the adored and venerable Isis; but still greater, perhaps, was their surprise, when they found the accused in the brilliant and admired Athenian.

"Glaucus!" cried the bystanders, with one accord: "is it even credible?"

"I would sooner," whispered one man to his neighbor, "believe it to be the Egyptian himself."

Here a centurion thrust himself into the gathering crowd, with an air of authority.

"How! blood spilt! who the murderer?"

The bystanders pointed to Glaucus.

"He!—by Mars, he has rather the air of being the victim! Who accuses him?"

"*I*," said Arbaces, drawing himself up haughtily; and the jewels which adorned his dress flashing in the eyes of the soldier, in-

stantly convinced that worthy warrior of the witness's respectability.

"Pardon me—your name?" said he.

"Arbaces; it is well known methinks in Pompeii. Passing through the grove, I beheld before me the Greek and the priest in earnest conversation. I was struck by the reeling motions of the first, his violent gestures, and the loudness of his voice; he seemed to me either drunk or mad. Suddenly I saw him raise his stilus—I darted forward—too late to arrest the blow. He had twice stabbed his victim, and was bending over him, when, in my horror and indignation, I struck the murderer to the ground. He fell without a struggle, which makes me yet more suspect that he was not altogether in his senses when the crime was perpetrated; for, recently recovered from a severe illness, my blow was comparatively feeble, and the frame of Glaucus, as you see, is strong and youthful."

"His eyes are open now—his lips move," said the soldier. "Speak, prisoner, what sayest thou to the charge?"

"The charge—ha—ha! Why, it was merrily done; when the old hag set her serpent at me, and Hecate stood by laughing from ear to ear—what could I do? But I am ill—I faint—the serpent's fiery tongue hath bitten me. Bear me to bed, and send for your physician; old Æsculapius himself will attend me if you let him know that I am Greek. Oh, mercy—mercy—I burn!—marrow and brain, I burn!"

And, with a thrilling and fierce groan, the Athenian fell back in the arms of the bystanders.

"He raves," said the officer, compassionately; "and in his delirium he has struck the priest. Hath any one present seen him to-day?"

"I," said one of the spectators, "beheld him in the morning. He passed my shop and accosted me. He seemed well and sane as the stoutest of us."

"And I saw him half an hour ago," said another, "passing up the streets, muttering to himself with strange gestures, and just as the Egyptian has described."

"A corroboration of the witness! it must be too true. He must at all events to the prætor; a pity, so young and so rich! But the crime is dreadful: a priest of Isis, in his very robes, too, and at the base itself of our most ancient chapel!"

At these words the crowd were reminded more forcibly, than in their excitement and curiosity they had yet been, of the heinousness of the sacrilege. They shuddered in pious horror.

"No wonder the earth has quaked," said one, "when it held such a monster!"

"Away with him to prison—away!" cried they all.

And one solitary voice was heard shrilly and joyously above the rest:—

"The beasts will not want a gladiator now,

'Ho, ho! for the merry, merry show!'"

It was the voice of the young woman whose conversation with Medon has been repeated.

"True—true—it chances in season for the games!" cried several; and at that thought all pity for the accused seemed vanished. His youth—his beauty, but fitted him better for the purpose of the arena.

"Bring hither some planks—or if at hand, a litter—to bear the dead,'" said Arbaces; "a priest of Isis ought scarcely to be carried to his temple by vulgar hands like a butchered gladiator."

At this the bystanders reverently laid the corpse of Apæcides on the ground, with the face upwards; and some of them went in search of some contrivance to bear the body, untouched by the profane.

It was just at that time that the crowd gave way to right and left as a sturdy form forced itself through, and Olinthus the Christian stood immediately confronting the Egyptian. But his eyes, at first, only rested with inexpressible grief and horror on that gory side and upturned face, on which the agony of violent death yet lingered.

"Murdered!" he said. "Is it thy zeal that has brought thee to this? Have they detected thy noble purpose, and by death prevented their own shame?"

He turned his head abruptly, and his eyes fell full on the solemn features of the Egyptian.

As he looked, you might see in his face, and even the slight shiver of his frame, the repugnance and aversion which the Christian

felt for one whom he knew to be so dangerous and so criminal. It was indeed the gaze of the bird upon the basilisk—so silent was it and so prolonged. But shaking off the sudden chill that had crept over him, Olinthus extended his right arm towards Arbaces, and said in a deep and loud voice:—

"Murder hath been done upon this corpse. Where is the murderer? Stand forth, Egyptian! For, as the Lord liveth, I believe *thou* art the man!"

An anxious and perturbed change might for one moment be detected on the dusky features of Arbaces; but it gave way to the frowning expression of indignation and scorn, as, awed and arrested by the suddenness and vehemence of the charge, the spectators pressed nearer and nearer upon the two more prominent actors.

"I know," said Arbaces, proudly, "who is my accuser, and I guess wherefore he thus arraigns me. Men and citizens, know this man for the most bitter of the Nazarenes, if that or Christians be their proper name! What marvel that in his malignity he dares accuse even an Egyptian of the murder of a priest of Egypt!"

"I know him! I know the dog!" shouted several voices. "It is Olinthus the Christian—or rather the Atheist—he denies the gods!"

"Peace! brethren," said Olinthus, with dignity, "and hear me! This murdered priest of Isis before his death embraced the Christian faith—he revealed to me the dark sins, the sorceries of yon Egyptian—the mummeries and delusions of the fane of Isis. He was about to declare them publicly. *He*, a stranger, unoffending, without enemies! who should shed his blood but one of those who feared his witness? Who might fear that testimony the most?—Arbaces, the Egyptian!"

"You hear him!" said Arbaces; "you hear him! he blasphemes!—Ask him if he believe in Isis?"

"Do I believe in an evil demon?" returned Olinthus, boldly.

A groan and shudder passed through the assembly. Nothing daunted, for, prepared at every time for peril, and in the present excitement losing all prudence, the Christian continued—

"Back, idolaters! this clay is not for your vain and polluting rites—it is to us—to the followers of Christ, that the last offices due to a Christian belong. I claim this dust in the name of the great Creator who has recalled the spirit!"

With so solemn and commanding a voice and aspect the Christian spoke these words, that even the crowd forbore to utter aloud the execration of fear and hatred, which in their hearts they conceived. And never, perhaps, since Lucifer and the Archangel contended for the body of the mighty Lawgiver, was there a more striking subject for the painter's genius than that scene exhibited. The dark trees—the stately fane—the moon full on the corpse of the deceased—the torches tossing wildly to and fro in the rear—the various faces of the motley audience—the insensible form of the Athenian, supported, in the distance; and in the foreground, and above all, the forms of Arbaces and the Christian: the first drawn to its full height, far taller than the herd around; his arms folded, his brow knit, his eyes fixed, his lip slightly curled in defiance and disdain. The last bearing, on a brow worn and furrowed, the majesty of an equal command—the features stern, yet frank—the aspect bold, yet open—the quiet dignity of the whole form impressed with an ineffable earnestness, hushed, as it were, in a solemn sympathy with the awe he himself had created. His left hand pointing to the corpse—his right hand raised to heaven.

The centurion pressed forward again.

"In the first place, hast thou, Olinthus, or whatever be thy name, any proof of the charge thou hast made against Arbaces beyond thy vague suspicions?"

Olinthus remained silent—the Egyptian laughed contemptuously.

"Dost thou claim the body of a priest of Isis as one of the Nazarene or Christian sect?"

"I do."

"Swear then by yon fane, yon statue of Cybele, by yon most ancient sacellum in Pompeii, that the dead man embraced your faith!"

"Vain man! I disown your idols! I abhor your temples! How can I swear by Cybele then?"

"Away! away with the atheist! away! the earth will swallow us, if we suffer these blasphemers in a sacred grove—away with him to death!"

"*To the beasts!*" added a female voice in the centre of the crowd; "*we shall have one a-piece now for the lion and tiger.*"

"If, O Nazarene, thou disbelievest in Cybele, which of our gods dost thou own?" resumed the soldier, unmoved by the cries around.

"None!"

"Hark to him! hark!" cried the crowd.

"O vain and blind!" continued the Christian, raising his voice, "can you believe in images of wood and stone? Do you imagine that they have eyes to see, or ears to hear, or hands to help ye? Is yon mute thing carved by man's art a goddess?—hath it made mankind?—alas! by mankind was it made. Lo! convince yourselves of its nothingness—of your folly."

And as he spoke, he strode across to the fane, and ere any of the bystanders were aware of his purpose, he, in his compassion or his zeal, struck the statue of wood from its pedestal.

"See!" cried he, "your goddess cannot avenge herself. Is this a thing to worship?"

Further words were denied to him; so gross and daring a sacrilege—of one, too, of the most sacred of their places of worship—filled even the most lukewarm with rage and horror. With one accord the crowd rushed upon him, seized, and but for the interference of the centurion, they would have torn him to pieces.

"Peace!" said the soldier, authoritatively,—"refer we this insolent blasphemer to the proper tribunal—time has been already wasted. Bear we both the culprits to the magistrates; place the body of the priest on the litter—carry it to his own home."

At this moment a priest of Isis stepped forward. "I claim these remains according to the custom of the priesthood."

"The flamen be obeyed," said the centurion. "How is the murderer?"

"Insensible, or asleep."

"Were his crimes less, I could pity him. On!"

Arbaces, as he turned, met the eye of that priest of Isis—it was Calenus; and something there was in that glance, so significant and sinister, that the Egyptian muttered to himself,—

"Could he have witnessed the deed?"

A girl darted from the crowd, and gazed hard on the face of Olinthus. *By Jupiter, a stout knave! I say, we shall have a man for the tiger now; one for each beast.*"

"Ho!" shouted the mob; "a man for the lion, and another for the tiger! What luck! Io Pæan!"

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE READER LEARNS THE CONDITION OF GLAUCUS.—FRIENDSHIP TESTED.—ENMITY SOFTENED.—LOVE THE SAME;—BECAUSE THE ONE LOVING IS BLIND!

The night was somewhat advanced, and the gay lounging-places of the Pompeians were still crowded. You might observe in the countenances of the various idlers a more earnest expression than usual. They talked in large knots and groups, as if they sought by numbers to divide the half-painful, half-pleasurable anxiety, which belonged to the subject on which they conversed:—it was a subject of life and death.

A young man passed briskly by the graceful portico of the temple of Fortune—so briskly, indeed, that he came with no slight force full against the rotund and comely form of that respectable citizen, Diomed, who was retiring homeward to his surburban villa.

"Holloa!" groaned the merchant, recovering with some difficulty his equilibrium; "have you no eyes? or do you think I have no feeling? By Jupiter! you have well-nigh driven out the divine particle; such another shock, and my soul will be in Hades?"

"Ah, Diomed! is it you? Forgive my inadvertence. I was absorbed in thinking of the reverses of life. Our poor friend, Glaucus, eh? who could have guessed it!"

"Well, but tell me, Clodius, is he really to be tried by the senate?"

"Yes; they say the crime is of so extraordinary a nature, that the senate itself must adjudge it; and so the lictors are to induct him * formally."

* Plin. Ep. ii. 11, 12; v. 4, 13.

"He has been accused publicly then?"

"To be sure; where have you been not to hear that?"

"Why, I have only just returned from Neapolis, whither I went on business the very morning after his crime;—so shocking, and at my house the same night that it happened!"

"There is no doubt of his guilt," said Clodius, shrugging his shoulders; "and as these crimes take precedence of all little undignified peccadilloes, they will hasten to finish the sentence previous to the games."

"The games! Good gods!" replied Diomed, with a slight shudder; "can they adjudge him to the beasts?—so young, so rich!"

"True; but then he is a Greek. Had he been a Roman, it would have been a thousand pities. These foreigners can be borne with in their prosperity; but in adversity we must not forget that they are in reality slaves. However, we of the upper classes are always tender-hearted; and he would certainly get off tolerably well if he were left to us: for, between ourselves, what is a paltry priest of Isis?—what Isis herself? But the common people are superstitious; they clamor for the blood of the sacrilegious one. It is dangerous not to give way to public opinion."

"And the blasphemer—the Christian, or Nazarene, or whatever else he be called?"

"Oh, poor dog! if he will sacrifice to Cybele, or Isis, he will be pardoned—if not, the tiger has him. At least, so I suppose; but the trial will decide. We talk while the urn's still empty. And the Greek may yet escape the deadly Θ* of his own alphabet. But enough of this gloomy subject. How is the fair Julia?"

"Well, I fancy."

"Commend me to her. But hark! the door yonder creaks on its hinges; it is the house of the prætor. Who comes forth? By Pollux! it is the Egyptian! What can he want with our official friend?"

"Some conference touching the murder, doubtless," replied Diomed; "but what was supposed to be the inducement to the crime? Glaucus was to have married the priest's sister."

"Yes, some say Apæcides refused the alliance. It might have been a sudden quarrel. Glaucus was evidently drunk;—nay, so much so as to have been quite insensible when taken up, and I hear is still delirious—whether with wine, terror, remorse, the Furies, or the Bacchanals, I cannot say."

"Poor fellow!—he has good counsel?"

"The best—Caius Pollio, an eloquent fellow enough. Pollio has been hiring all the poor gentlemen and well-born spendthrifts of Pompeii to dress shabbily and sneak about, swearing their friendship to Glaucus (who would not have spoken to them to be made emperor!—I will do him justice, he was a gentleman in his choice of acquaintance), and trying to melt the stony citizens into pity. But it will not do; Isis is mightily popular just at this moment."

"And, by the by, I have some merchandise at Alexandria. Yes, Isis ought to be protected."

"True; so farewell, old gentleman: we shall meet soon; if not, we must have a friendly bet at the Amphitheatre. All my calculations are confounded by this cursed misfortune of Glaucus! He had bet on Lydon the gladiator; I must make up my tablets elsewhere. *Vale!*"

Leaving the less active Diomed to regain his villa, Clodius strode on, humming a Greek air, and perfuming the night with the odors that steamed from his snowy garments and flowing locks.

"If," thought he, "Glaucus feed the lion, Julia will no longer have a person to love better than me; she will certainly dote on me;—and so, I suppose, I must marry. By the gods! the twelve lines begin to fali—men look suspiciously at my hand when it rattles the dice. That infernal Sallust insinuates cheating; and if it be discovered that the ivory is cogged, why farewell to the merry supper and the perfumed billet;—Clodius is undone! Better marry, then, while I may, renounce gaming, and push my fortune (or rather the gentle Julia's) at the imperial court."

Thus muttering the schemes of his ambition, if by that high name the projects of

* Θ, the initial of θάνατος (death), the condemning letter of the Greeks, as C was of the Romans.

Clodius may be called, the gamester found himself suddenly accosted; he turned and beheld the dark brow of Arbaces.

"Hail, noble Clodius! pardon my interruption; and inform me, I pray you, which is the house of Sallust?"

"It is but a few yards hence, wise Arbaces. But does Sallust entertain to-night?"

"I know not," answered the Egyptian; "nor am I, perhaps, one of those whom he would seek as a boon companion. But thou knowest that his house holds the person of Glaucus, the murderer?"

"Ay! he, good-hearted epicure, believes in the Greek's innocence! You remind me that he has become his surety; and, therefore, till the trial, is responsible for his appearance.* Well, Sallust's house is better than a prison, especially that wretched hole in the forum. But for what can *you* seek Glaucus?"

"Why, noble Clodius, if we could save him from execution it would be well. The condemnation of the rich is a blow upon society itself. I should like to confer with him—for I hear he has recovered his senses—and ascertain the motives of his crime; they may be so extenuating as to plead in his defence."

"You are benevolent, Arbaces."

"Benevolence is the duty of one who aspires to wisdom," replied the Egyptian, modestly. "Which way lies Sallust's mansion?"

"I will show you," said Clodius, "if you will suffer me to accompany you a few steps. But, pray, what has become of the poor girl who was to have wed the Athenian—the sister of the murdered priest?"

"Alas! well-nigh insane. Sometimes she utters imprecations on the murderer—then suddenly stops short—then cries, 'But *why* curse? Oh, my brother! Glaucus was *not* thy murderer—never will I believe it!' Then she begins again, and again stops short, and mutters awfully to herself, 'Yet if it were indeed he?'"

"Unfortunate Ione!"

"But it is well for her that those solemn cares to the dead which religion enjoins have hitherto greatly absorbed her attention from Glaucus and herself: and, in the dimness of her senses, she scarcely seems aware that Glaucus is apprehended and on the eve of trial. When the funeral rites due to Apæcides are performed, her apprehension will return; and then I fear me much that her friends will be revolted by seeing her run to succor and aid the murderer of her brother!"

"Such scandal should be prevented."

"I trust I *have* taken precautions to that effect. I am her lawful guardian, and have just succeeded in obtaining permission to escort her, after the funeral of Apæcides, to my own house; there, please the gods! she will be secure."

"You have done well, sage Arbaces. And, now, yonder is the house of Sallust. The gods keep you! Yet, hark you, Arbaces—why so gloomy and unsocial? Men say you *can* be gay—why not let me initiate you into the pleasures of Pompeii?—I flatter myself no one knows them better."

"I thank you, noble Clodius: under your auspices I might venture, I think, to wear the philyra: but, at my age, I should be an awkward pupil."

"Oh, never fear; I have made converts of fellows of seventy. The rich, too, are never old."

"You flatter me. At some future time I will remind you of your promise."

"You may command Marcus Clodius at all times:—and so, *vale!*"

"Now," said the Egyptian, soliloquizing, "I am not wantonly a man of blood; I would willingly save this Greek, if, by confessing the crime, he will lose himself for ever to Ione, and for ever free me from the chance of discovery; and I *can* save him by persuading Julia to own the philtre, which will be held his excuse. But if he do not confess the crime, why Julia must be shamed from the confession, and he must die!—die, lest he prove my rival with the living—die, that he may be my proxy with the dead! Will he confess?—can he not be persuaded that in his delirium he struck the blow? To me it would give far greater safety than even his death. Hem! we must hazard the experiment."

Sweeping along the narrow street, Arbaces now approached the house of Sallust, when

* If a criminal could obtain surety (called *vades* in capital offences), he was not compelled to lie in prison till after sentence.

he beheld a dark form wrapped in a cloak, and stretched at length across the threshold of the door.

So still lay the figure, and so dim was its outline, that any other than Arbaces might have felt a superstitious fear, lest he beheld one of those grim *lemures*, who, above all other spots, haunted the threshold of the homes they formerly possessed. But not for Arbaces were such dreams.

"Rise!" said he, touching the figure with his foot; "thou obstructest the way!"

"Ha! who art thou?" cried the form, in a sharp tone; and as she raised herself from the ground, the starlight fell full on the pale face and fixed but sightless eyes of Nydia the Thessalian. "Who art thou? I know the burden of thy voice."

"Blind girl! what dost thou here at this late hour? Fie!—is this seeming thy sex or years? Home, girl!"

"I know thee," said Nydia, in a low voice, "thou art Arbaces, the Egyptian:" then, as if inspired by some sudden impulse, she flung herself at his feet, and clasping his knees, exclaimed, in a wild and passionate tone, "Oh dread and potent man! save him—save him! He is not guilty—it is I! He lies within ill—dying, and I—I am the hateful cause! And they will not admit me to him—they spurn the blind girl from the hall. Oh, heal him! thou knowest some herb—some spell—some counter-charm, for it is a potion that hath wrought this frenzy!"

"Hush, child! I know all!—thou forgettest that I accompanied Julia to the saga's home. Doubtless her hand administered the draught; but her reputation demands thy silence. Reproach not thyself—what must be, must: meanwhile, I seek the criminal—he may yet be saved. Away!"

Thus saying, Arbaces extricated himself from the clasp of the despairing Thessalian, and knocked loudly at the door.

In a few moments the heavy bars were heard suddenly to yield, and the porter, half opening the door, demanded who was there.

"Arbaces—important business to Sallust relative to Glaucus. I come from the prætor."

The porter, half yawning, half groaning, admitted the tall form of the Egyptian. Nydia sprang forward. "How is he?" she cried; "tell me—tell me!"

"Ho, mad girl! is it thou still?—for shame! Why, they say he is sensible."

"The gods be praised!—and you will not admit me? Ah! I beseech thee——"

"Admit thee!—no. A pretty salute I should prepare for these shoulders were I to admit such things as thou! Go home!"

The door closed, and Nydia, with a deep sigh, laid herself down once more on the cold stones; and, wrapping her cloak round her face, resumed her weary vigil.

Meanwhile Arbaces had already gained the triclinium where Sallust, with his favorite freedman, sat late at supper.

"What! Arbaces! and at this hour!—Accept this cup."

"Nay, gentle Sallust; it is on business, not pleasure, that I venture to disturb thee. How doth thy charge?—they say in the town that he has recovered sense."

"Alas! and truly," replied the good-natured but thoughtless Sallust, wiping the tear from his eyes; "but so shattered are his nerves and frame that I scarcely recognize the brilliant and gay carouser I was wont to know. Yet, strange to say, he cannot account for the cause of the sudden frenzy that seized him—he retains but a dim consciousness of what hath passed; and, despite thy witness, wise Egyptian, solemnly upholds his innocence of the death of Apæcides."

"Sallust," said Arbaces, gravely, "there is much in thy friend's case that merits a peculiar indulgence; and could we learn from his lips the confession and the cause of his crime, much might be yet hoped from the mercy of the senate; for the senate, thou knowest, hath the power either to mitigate or to sharpen the law. Therefore it is that I have conferred with the highest authority of the city, and obtained his permission to hold a private conference this night with the Athenian. To-morrow, thou knowest, the trial comes on."

"Well," said Sallust, "thou wilt be worthy of thy Eastern name and fame if thou canst learn aught from him; but thou mayst try. Poor Glaucus!—and he had such an excellent appetite! He eats nothing now!"

The benevolent epicure was moved sensi-

bly at this thought. He sighed, and ordered his slaves to refill his cup.

"Night wanes," said the Egyptian; "suffer me to see thy ward now."

Sallust nodded assent, and led the way to a small chamber, guarded without by two dozing slaves. The door opened; at the request of Arbaces, Sallust withdrew—the Egyptian was alone with Glaucus.

One of those tall and graceful candelabra common to that day, supporting a single lamp, burned beside the narrow bed. Its rays fell palely over the face of the Athenian, and Arbaces was moved to see how sensibly that countenance had changed. The rich color was gone, the cheek was sunk, the lips were convulsed and pallid; fierce had been the struggle between reason and madness, life and death. The youth, the strength of Glaucus had conquered; but the freshness of blood and soul—the life of life, its glory and its zest, were gone for ever.

The Egyptian seated himself quietly beside the bed; Glaucus still lay mute and unconscious of his presence. At length, after a considerable pause, Arbaces thus spoke:—

"Glaucus, we have been enemies. I come to thee alone, and in the dead of night—thy friend, perhaps thy savior."

As the steed starts from the path of the tiger, Glaucus sprang up breathless—alarmed, panting at the abrupt voice, the sudden apparition of his foe. Their eyes met, and neither, for some moments, had power to withdraw his gaze. The flush went and came over the face of the Athenian, and the bronzed cheek of the Egyptian grew a shade more pale. At length, with an inward groan, Glaucus turned away, drew his hand across his brow, sunk back, and muttered—

"Am I still dreaming?"

"No, Glaucus, thou art awake. By this right hand and my father's head, thou seest one who may save thy life. Hark! I know what thou hast done, but I know also its excuse, of which thou thyself art ignorant. Thou hast committed murder, it is true—a sacrilegious murder: frown not—start not—these eyes saw it. But I can save thee—I can prove how thou wert bereaved of sense, and made not a free-thinking and free-acting man. But in order to save thee, thou must confess thy crime. Sign but this paper, acknowledging thy hand in the death of Apæcides, and thou shaltavoid the fatal urn."

"What words are these?—Murder and Apæcides!—Did I not see him stretched on the ground bleeding and a corpse? and wouldst thou persuade me that *I* did the deed? Man, thou liest! Away!"

"Be not rash—Glaucus, be not hasty; the deed is proved. Come, come, thou mayst well be excused for not recalling the act of thy delirium, and which thy sober senses would have shunned even to contemplate. But let me try to refresh thy exhausted and weary memory. Thou knowest thou wert walking with the priest, disputing about his sister; thou knowest he was intolerant, and half a Nazarene, and he sought to convert thee, and ye had hot words; and he calumniated thy mode of life, and swore he would not marry Ione to thee—and then, in thy wrath and thy frenzy, thou didst strike the sudden blow. Come, come; you can recollect this!—read this papyrus, it runs to that effect—sign it, and thou art saved."

"Barbarian, give me the written lie, that I may tear it! *I* the murderer of Ione's brother! *I* confess to have injured one hair of the head of him she loved! Let me rather perish a thousand times!"

"Beware!" said Arbaces, in a low and hissing tone; "there is but one choice—thy confession and thy signature, or the amphitheatre and the lion's maw!"

As the Egyptian fixed his eyes upon the sufferer, he hailed with joy the signs of evident emotion that seized the latter at these words. A slight shudder passed over the Athenian's frame—his lip fell—an expression of sudden fear and wonder betrayed itself in his brow and eye.

"Great gods," he said, in a low voice, "what reverse is this? It seems but a little day since life laughed out from amidst roses—Ione mine—youth, health, love, lavishing on me their treasures; and now—pain, madness, shame, death! And for what? what have I done? Oh, I am mad still!"

"Sign, and be saved!" said the soft, sweet voice of the Egyptian.

"Tempter, never!" cried Glaucus, in the reaction of rage. "Thou knowest me not; thou knowest not the haughty soul of an

Athenian! The sudden face of death might appal me for a moment, but the fear is over. Dishonor appals for ever! Who will debase his name to save his life? who exchange clear thoughts for sullen days? who will belie himself to shame, and stand blackened in the eyes of glory and of love? If to earn a few years of polluted life there be so base a coward, dream not, dull barbarian of Egypt! to find him in one who has trod the same sod as Harmodius, and breathed the same air as Socrates. Go! leave me to live without self-reproach—or to perish without fear!"

"Bethink thee well! the lion's fangs; the hoots of the brutal mob; the vulgar gaze on thy dying agony and mutilated limbs; thy name degraded; thy corpse unburied; the shame thou wouldst avoid clinging to thee for aye and ever!"

"Thou ravest! *thou* art the madman! shame is not in the loss of other men's esteem,—it is in the loss of our own. Wilt thou go?—my eyes loathe the sight of thee! hating ever, I despise thee now!"

"I go," said Arbaces, stung and exasperated, but not without some pitying admiration of his victim,—"I go; we meet twice again—once at the Trial, once at the Death! Farewell!"

The Egyptian rose slowly, gathered his robes about him, and left the chamber. He sought Sallust for a moment, whose eyes began to reel with the vigils of the cup: "He is still unconscious, or still obstinate; there is no hope for him."

"Say not so," replied Sallust, who felt but little resentment against the Athenian's accuser, for he possessed no great austerity of virtue, and was rather moved by his friend's reverses than persuaded of his innocence,—"say not so, my Egyptian: so good a drinker shall be saved if possible. Bacchus against Isis!"

"We shall see," said the Egyptian.

Sullenly the bolts were again withdrawn—the door unclosed; Arbaces was in the open street; and poor Nydia once more started from her long watch.

"Wilt thou save him?" she cried, clasping her hands.

"Child, follow me home: I would speak to thee—it is for his sake I ask it."

"And thou wilt save him?"

No answer came forth to the thirsting ear of the blind girl; Arbaces had already proceeded far up the street; she hesitated a moment, and then followed his steps in silence.

"I must secure this girl," said he, musingly, "lest she give evidence of the philtre; as to the vain Julia, she will not betray herself."

CHAPTER VIII.

A CLASSIC FUNERAL.

While Arbaces had been thus employed, Sorrow and Death were in the house of Ione. It was the night preceding the morn in which the solemn funeral rites were to be decreed to the remains of the murdered Apæcides. The corpse had been removed from the temple of Isis to the house of the nearest surviving relative, and Ione had heard, in the same breath, the death of her brother and the accusation against her betrothed. That first violent anguish which blunts the sense to all but itself, and the forbearing silence of her slaves, had prevented her learning minutely the circumstances attendant on the fate of her lover. His illness, his frenzy, and his approaching trial, were unknown to her. She learned only the accusation against him, and at once indignantly rejected it; nay, on hearing that Arbaces was the accuser, she required no more to induce her firmly and solemnly to believe that the Egyptian himself was the criminal. But the vast and absorbing importance attached by the ancients to the performance of every ceremonial connected with the death of a relation, had, as yet, confined her woe and her convictions to the chamber of the deceased. Alas! it was not for her to perform that tender and touching office, which obliged the nearest relative to endeavor to catch the last breath—the parting soul—of the beloved one: but it was hers to close the straining eyes, the distorted lips: to watch by the consecrated clay, as, fresh bathed and anointed, it lay in festive robes upon the ivory bed; to strew the couch with leaves and flowers, and to renew the solemn cypress

branch at the threshold of the door. And in these sad offices, in lamentation and in prayer, Ione forgot herself. It was among the loveliest customs of the ancients to bury the young at the morning twilight; for, as they strove to give the softest interpretation to death, so they poetically imagined that Aurora, who loved the young, had stolen them to her embrace; and though in the instance of the murdered priest this fable could not appropriately cheat the fancy, the general custom was still preserved.*

The stars were fading one by one from the gray heavens, and night slowly receding before the approach of morn, when a dark group stood motionless before Ione's door. High and slender torches, made paler by the unmellowed dawn, cast their light over various countenances, hushed for the moment in one solemn and intent expression. And now there arose a slow and dismal music, which accorded sadly with the rite, and floated far along the desolate and breathless streets; while a chorus of female voices (the Præficæ so often cited by the Roman poets), accompanying the Tibicen and the Mysian flute, woke the following strain :—

THE FUNERAL DIRGE.

"O'er the sad threshold, where the cypress bough
Supplants the rose that should adorn thy home,
On the last pilgrimage on earth that now
Awaits thee, wanderer to Cocytus, come!
Darkly we woo, and weeping we invite—
Death is thy host—his banquet asks thy soul;
Thy garlands hang within the House of Night,
And the black stream alone shall fill thy bowl.

No more for thee the laughter and the song,
The jocund night—the glory of the day!
The Argive daughters † at their labors long;
The hell-bird swooping on its Titan prey—
The false Æolides ‡ upheaving slow,
O'er the eternal hill, the eternal stone;
The crownèd Lydian,§ in his parching woe,
And green Callirrhoë's monster-headed son,‖—

These shalt thou see, dim shadow'd through the dark,
Which makes the sky of Pluto's dreary shore;
Lo! where thou stand'st, pale-gazing on the bark
That waits our rite ¶ to bear thee trembling o'er!
Come, then! no more delay!—the phantom pines
Amidst the Unburied for its latest home;
O'er the gray sky the torch impatient shines—
Come, mourner, forth!—the lost one bids thee come!"

As the hymn died away, the group parted in twain; and placed upon a couch, spread with a purple pall, the corpse of Apæcides was carried forth, with the feet foremost. The designator, or marshal of the sombre ceremonial, accompanied by his torch-bearers, clad in black, gave the signal, and the procession moved dreadly on.

First went the musicians, playing a slow march—the solemnity of the lower instruments broken by many a louder and wilder burst of the funeral trumpet: next followed the hired mourners, chanting their dirges to the dead; and the female voices were mingled with those of boys, whose tender years made still more striking the contrast of life and death—the fresh leaf and the withered one. But the players, the buffoons, the archimimus (whose duty it was to personate the dead)—these, the customary attendants at ordinary funerals, were banished from a funeral attended with so many terrible associations.

The priests of Isis came next in their snowy garments, barefooted, and supporting sheaves of corn; while before the corpse were carried the images of the deceased and his many Athenian forefathers. And behind the bier followed, amidst her women, the sole surviving relative of the dead—her head bare, her locks dishevelled, her face paler than marble, but composed and still, save ever and anon, as some tender thought, awakened by the music, flashed upon the dark lethargy of woe, she covered that countenance with her hands, and sobbed unseen: for hers were not the noisy sorrow, the shrill lament, the ungoverned gesture, which characterized those who honored less faithfully. In that age, as in all, the channel of deep grief flowed hushed and still.

And so the procession swept on, till it had traversed the streets, passed the city gate, and gained the Place of Tombs without the wall, which the traveller yet beholds.

Raised in the form of an altar—of unpolished pine, amidst whose interstices were placed preparations of combustible matter—stood the funeral pyre; and around it drooped

* This was rather a Greek than a Roman custom; but the reader will observe, that in the cities of Magna Græcia the Greek customs and superstitions were much mingled with the Roman.

† The Danaïdes.

‡ Sisyphus.

§ Tantalus.

‖ Geryon.

¶ The most idle novel-reader need scarcely be reminded, that not till after the funeral rites were the dead carried over the Styx.

the dark and gloomy cypresses so consecrated by song to the tomb.

As soon as the bier was placed upon the pile, the attendants parting on either side, Ione passed up to the couch, and stood before the unconscious clay for some moments motionless and silent. The features of the dead had been composed from the first agonized expression of violent death. Hushed for ever the terror and the doubt, the contest of passion, the awe of religion, the struggle of the past and present, the hope and the horror of the future!—of all that racked and desolated the breast of that young aspirant to the Holy of Life, what trace was visible in the awful serenity of that impenetrable brow and unbreathing lip? The sister gazed, and not a sound was heard amidst the crowd; there was something terrible, yet softening, also, in the silence; and when it broke, it broke sudden and abrupt—it broke with a loud and passionate cry—the vent of long smothered despair.

"My brother! my brother!" cried the poor orphan, falling upon the couch; "thou whom the worm on thy path feared not—what enemy couldst thou provoke? Oh, is it in truth come to this? Awake! awake! we grew together! Are we thus torn asunder? Thou art not dead—thou sleepest. Awake! awake!"

The sound of her piercing voice aroused the sympathy of the mourners, and they broke into loud and rude lament. This startled, this recalled Ione; she looked up hastily and confusedly, as if for the first time sensible of the presence of those around.

"*Ah!*" she murmured with a shiver, "*we are not then alone!*"

With that, after a brief pause, she rose: and her pale and beautiful countenance was again composed and rigid. With fond and trembling hands, she unclosed the lids of the deceased;* but when the dull glazed eye, no longer beaming with love and life, met hers, she shrieked aloud, as if she had seen a spectre. Once more recovering herself, she kissed again and again the lids, the lips, the brow; and with mechanic and unconscious hand, received from the high-priest of her brother's temple the funeral torch.

The sudden burst of music, the sudden song of the mourners, announced the birth of the sanctifying flame.

HYMN TO THE WIND.

I.

"On thy couch of cloud reclined,
Wake, O soft and sacred Wind!
Soft and sacred will we name thee,
Whosoe'er the sire that claim thee—
Whether old Auster's dusky child,
Or the loud son of Eurus wild;
Or his* who o'er the darkling deeps,
From the bleak North, in tempest sweeps,
Still shalt thou seem as dear to us
As flowery-crownèd Zephyrus,
When, through twilight's starry dew,
Trembling, he hastes his nymph † to woo.

II.

Lo! our silver censers swinging,
Perfumes o'er thy path are flinging,—
Ne'er o'er Tempe's breathless valleys,
Ne'er o'er Cypria's cedarn alleys,—
Or the Rose-isle's ‡ moonlit sea,
Floated sweets more worthy thee.
Lo! around our vases sending
Myrrh and nard with cassia blending;
Paving air with odors meet
For thy silver-sandall'd feet!

III.

August and everlasting air!
The source of all that breathe and be,
From the mute clay before thee bear
The seeds it took from thee!
Aspire, bright flame! aspire!
Wild wind!—awake, awake!
Thine own, O solemn Fire!
O Air, thine own retake!

IV.

It comes! it comes! Lo! it sweeps,
The Wind we invoke the while!
And crackles, and darts, and leaps
The light on the holy pile!
It rises! its wings interweave
With the flames,—how they howl and heave!
Toss'd, whirl'd to and fro,
How the flame-serpents glow!
Rushing higher and higher,
On—on, fearful Fire!
Thy giant limbs twined
With the arms of the Wind!
Lo! the elements meet on the throne
Of death—to reclaim their own!

V.

Swing, swing the censer round—
Tune the strings to a softer sound!
From the chains of thy earthly toil,
From the clasp of thy mortal coil,
From the prison where clay confined thee,
The hands of the flame unbind thee!
O Soul! thou art free—all free!

* Pliny, ii. 37.

* Boreas. † Flora. ‡ Rhodes.

As the winds in their ceaseless chase,
When they rush o'er their airy sea,
Thou mayst speed through the realms of space—
No fetter is forged for thee!
Rejoice! o'er the sluggard tide
Of the Styx thy bark can glide,
And thy steps evermore shall rove
Through the glades of the happy grove;
Where, far from the loath'd Cocytus,
The loved and the lost invite us.
Thou art slave to the earth no more!
O, soul, thou art freed!—and we?—
Ah! when shall our toil be o'er?
Ah! when shall we rest with thee?"

And now high and far into the dawning skies broke the fragrant fire; it flashed luminously across the gloomy cypresses—it shot above the massive walls of the neighboring city; and the early fishermen started to behold the blaze reddening on the waves of the creeping sea.

But Ione sat down apart and alone, and, leaning her face upon her hands, saw not the flame, nor heard the lamentation or the music: she felt only one sense of loneliness,—she had not yet arrived to that hallowing sense of comfort, when we know that we are *not* alone—that the dead are with us!

The breeze rapidly aided the effect of the combustibles placed within the pile. By degrees the flame wavered, lowered, dimmed, and slowly, by fits and unequal starts, died away—emblem of life itself; where, just before, all was restlessness and flame, now lay the dull and smouldering ashes.

The last sparks were extinguished by the attendants—the embers were collected. Steeped in the rarest wine and the costliest odors, the remains were placed in a silver urn, which was solemnly stored in one of the neighboring sepulchres beside the road; and they placed within it the vial full of tears, and the small coin which poetry still consecrated to the grim boatman. And the sepulchre was covered with flowers and chaplets, and incense kindled on the altar, and the tomb hung round with many lamps.

But the next day, when the priest returned with fresh offerings to the tomb, he found that to the relics of heathen superstition some unknown hands had added a green palm-branch. He suffered it to remain, unknowing that it was the sepulchral emblem of Christianity.

When the above ceremonies were over, one of the Præficæ three times sprinkled the mourners from the purifying branch of laurel, uttering the last word, "*Ilicet!*"—Depart!—and the rite was done.

But first they paused to utter—weepingly and many times—the affecting farewell, "*Salve Eternum!*" And as Ione yet lingered, they woke the parting strain.

SALVE ETERNUM.

I.

"Farewell, O soul departed!
Farewell, O sacred urn!
Bereaved and broken-hearted,
To earth the mourners turn!
To the dim and dreary shore,
Thou art gone our steps before!
But thither the swift Hours lead us,
And thou dost but awhile precede us!
Salve—salve!
Loved urn, and thou solemn cell,
Mute ashes!—farewell, farewell!
Salve—salve!

II.

Ilicet—ire licet—
Ah, vainly would we part!
Thy tomb is the faithful heart.
About evermore we bear thee;
For who from the heart can tear thee?
Vainly we sprinkle o'er us
The drops of the cleansing stream;
And vainly bright before us
The lustral fire shall beam.
For where is the charm expelling
Thy thought from its sacred dwelling?
Our griefs are thy funeral feast,
And memory thy mourning priest.
Salve—salve!

III.

Ilicet—ire licet!
The spark from the hearth is gone
Wherever the air shall bear it;
The elements take their own—
The shadows receive thy spirit.
It will soothe thee to feel our grief,
As thou glid'st by the Gloomy River!
If love may in life be brief,
In death it is fixed for ever.
Salve—salve!
In the hall which our feasts illume,
The rose for an hour may bloom;
But the cypress that decks the tomb—
The cypress is green for ever!
Salve—salve!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH AN ADVENTURE HAPPENS TO IONE.

WHILE some stayed behind to share with the priests the funeral banquet, Ione and her handmaids took homeward their melancholy way. And now (the last duties to her brother performed) her mind awoke from its absorption, and she thought of her affianced, and the dread charge against him. Not—as we have before said—attaching even a momentary belief to the unnatural accusation, but nursing the darkest suspicion against Arbaces, she felt that justice to her lover and to her murdered relative demanded her to seek the prætor, and communicate her impression, unsupported as it might be. Questioning her maidens, who had hitherto—kindly anxious, as I have said, to save her the additional agony—refrained from informing her of the state of Glaucus, she learned that he had been dangerously ill; that he was in custody, under the roof of Sallust; that the day of his trial was appointed.

"Averting gods!" she exclaimed; "and have I been so long forgetful of him? Have I seemed to shun him? O! let me hasten to do him justice—to show that I, the nearest relative of the dead, believe him innocent of the charge. Quick! quick!—let us fly. Let me soothe—tend—cheer him! and if they will not believe me; if they will not yield to my conviction; if they sentence him to exile or to death, let me share the sentence with him!"

Instinctively she hastened her pace, confused and bewildered, scarce knowing whither she went; now designing first to seek the prætor, and now to rush to the chamber of Glaucus. She hurried on—she passed the gate of the city—she was in the long street leading up the town. The houses were opened, but none were yet astir in the streets; the life of the city was scarce awake—when lo! she came suddenly upon a small knot of men standing beside a covered litter. A tall figure stepped from the midst of them, and Ione shrieked aloud to behold Arbaces.

"Fair Ione!" said he, gently, and appearing not to heed her alarm; "my ward, my pupil! forgive me if I disturb thy pious sorrows; but the prætor, solicitous of thy honor, and anxious that thou mayest not rashly be implicated in the coming trial; knowing the strange embarrassment of thy state (seeking justice for thy brother, but dreading punishment to thy betrothed)—sympathizing, too, with thy unprotected and friendless condition, and deeming it harsh that thou shouldst be suffered to act unguided and mourn alone—hath wisely and paternally confided thee to the care of thy lawful guardian. Behold the writing which intrusts thee to my charge!"

"Dark Egyptian!" cried Ione, drawing herself proudly aside; "begone! It is thou that hast slain my brother! Is it to thy care, thy hands yet reeking with his blood, that they will give the sister? Ha! thou turnest pale! thy conscience smites thee! thou tremblest at the thunderbolt of the avenging god! Pass on, and leave me to my woe!"

"Thy sorrows unstring thy reason, Ione," said Arbaces, attempting in vain his usual calmness of tone. "I forgive thee. Thou wilt find me now, as ever, thy surest friend. But the public streets are not the fitting place for us to confer—for me to console thee. Approach, slaves! Come, my sweet charge, the litter awaits thee."

The amazed and terrified atttendants gathered round Ione, and clung to her knees.

"Arbaces," said the eldest of the maidens, "this is surely not the law! For nine days after the funeral, is it not written that the relatives of the deceased shall not be molested in their homes, or interrupted in their solitary grief?"

"Woman!" returned Arbaces, imperiously waving his hand, "to place a ward under the roof of her guardian is not against the funeral laws. I tell thee I have the fiat of the prætor. This delay is indecorous. Place her in the litter."

So saying, he threw his arm firmly round the shrinking form of Ione. She drew back, gazed earnestly in his face, and then burst into hysterical laughter:—

"Ha, ha! this is well—well! Excellent guardian—paternal law! Ha, ha!" And, startled herself at the dread echo of that shrill and maddened laughter, she sunk, as it died away, lifeless upon the ground. . . .

A minute more, and Arbaces had lifted her into the litter. The bearers moved swiftly on, and the unfortunate Ione was soon borne from the sight of her weeping handmaids.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT BECOMES OF NYDIA IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES.—THE EGYPTIAN FEELS COMPASSION FOR GLAUCUS.—COMPASSION IS OFTEN A VERY USELESS VISITOR TO THE GUILTY.

It will be remembered that, at the command of Arbaces, Nydia followed the Egyptian to his home, and conversing there with her, he learned, from the confession of her despair and remorse, that her hand, and not Julia's, had administered to Glaucus the fatal potion. At another time the Egyptian might have conceived a philosophical interest in sounding the depths and origin of the strange and absorbing passion which, in blindness and in slavery, this singular girl had dared to cherish; but at present he spared no thought from himself. As, after her confession, the poor Nydia threw herself on her knees before him, and besought him to restore the health and save the life of Glaucus—for in her youth and ignorance she imagined the dark magician all-powerful to effect both—Arbaces, with unheeding ears, was noting only the new expediency of detaining Nydia a prisoner until the trial and fate of Glaucus were decided. For if, when he judged her merely the accomplice of Julia in obtaining the philtre, he had felt it was dangerous to the full success of his vengeance to allow her to be at large—to appear, perhaps, as a witness—to avow the manner in which the sense of Glaucus had been darkened, and thus win indulgence to the crime of which he was accused—how much more was she likely to volunteer her testimony when she herself had administered the draught, and, inspired by love, would be only anxious, at any expense of shame, to retrieve her error and preserve her beloved? Besides, how unworthy of the rank and repute of Arbaces to be implicated in the disgrace of pandering to the passion of Julia, and assisting in the unholy rites of the Saga of Vesuvius! Nothing less, indeed, than his desire to induce Glaucus to own the murder of Apæcides, as a policy evidently the best both for his own permament safety and his successful suit with Ione, could ever have led him to contemplate the confession of Julia.

As for Nydia, who was necessarily cut off by her blindness from much of the knowledge of active life, and who, a slave and a stranger, was naturally ignorant of the perils of the Roman law, she thought rather of the illness and delirium of her Athenian, than the crime of which she had vaguely heard him accused, or the chances of the impending trial. Poor wretch that she was, whom none addressed, none cared for, what did she know of the senate and the sentence—the hazard of the law—the ferocity of the people—the arena and the lion's den? She was accustomed only to associate with the thought of Glaucus every thing that was prosperous and lofty—she could not imagine that any peril, save from the madness of her love, could menace that sacred head. He seemed to her set apart for the blessings of life. *She* only had disturbed the current of his felicity; she knew not, she dreamed not, that the stream, once so bright, was dashing on to darkness and to death. It was therefore to restore the brain that *she* had marred, to save the life that *she* had endangered, that she implored the assistance of the great Egyptian.

"Daughter," said Arbaces, waking from his revery, "thou must rest here; it is not meet for thee to wander along the streets, and be spurned from the threshold by the rude feet of slaves. I have compassion on thy soft crime—I will do all to remedy it. Wait here patiently for some days, and Glaucus shall be restored." So saying, and without waiting for her reply, he hastened from the room, drew the bolt across the door, and consigned the care and wants of his prisoner to the slave who had the charge of that part of the mansion.

Alone, then, and musingly, he waited the morning light, and with it repaired, as we have seen, to possess himself of the person of Ione.

His primary object, with respect to the unfortunate Neapolitan, was that which he had

really stated to Clodius, viz., to prevent her interesting herself actively in the trial of Glaucus, and also to guard against her accusing him (which she would, doubtless, have done) of his former act of perfidy and violence towards her, his ward—denouncing his causes for vengeance against Glaucus—unveiling the hypocrisy of his character—and casting any doubt upon his veracity in the charge which he had made against the Athenian. Not till he had encountered her that morning—not till he had heard her loud denunciations—was he aware that he had also another danger to apprehend in her suspicion of his crime. He hugged himself now in the thought that these ends were effected; that one, at once the object of his passion and his fear, was in his power. He believed more than ever the flattering promises of the stars; and when he sought Ione in that chamber in the inmost recesses of his mysterious mansion to which he had consigned her—when he found her overpowered by blow upon blow, and passing from fit to fit, from violence to torpor, in all the alternations of hysterical disease—he thought more of the loveliness, which no frenzy could distort, than of the woe which he had brought upon her. In that sanguine vanity common to men who through life have been invariably successful, whether in fortune or love, he flattered himself that when Glaucus had perished—when his name was solemnly blackened by the award of a legal judgment, his title to her love for ever forfeited by condemnation to death for the murder of her own brother—her affection would be changed to horror; and that his tenderness and his passion, assisted by all the arts with which he well knew how to dazzle woman's imagination, might elect him to that throne in her heart from which his rival would be so awfully expelled. This was his hope; but should it fail, his unholy and fervid passion whispered, "At the worst, *now* she is in my power."

Yet, withal, he felt that uneasiness and apprehension which attend upon the chance of detection, even when the criminal is insensible to the voice of conscience—that vague terror of the consequences of crime, which is often mistaken for remorse at the crime itself. The buoyant air of Campania weighed heavily upon his breast; he longed to hurry from a scene where danger might not sleep eternally with the dead; and, having Ione now in his possession, he secretly resolved, as soon as he had witnessed the last agony of his rival, to transport his wealth—and her, the costliest treasure of all, to some distant shore.

"Yes," said he, striding to and fro his solitary chamber—"yes, the law that gave me the person of my ward gives me the possession of my bride. Far across the broad main will we sweep on our search after novel luxuries and inexperienced pleasures. Cheered by my stars, supported by the omens of my soul, we will penetrate to those vast and glorious worlds which my wisdom tells me lie yet untracked in the recesses of the circling sea. There may this heart, possessed of love, grow once more alive to ambition—there, amongst nations uncrushed by the Roman yoke, and to whose ear the name of Rome has not yet been wafted, I may found an empire, and transplant my ancestral creed; renewing the ashes of the dead Theban rule; continuing in yet grander shores the dynasty of my crowned fathers, and waking in the noble heart of Ione the grateful consciousness that she shares the lot of one who, far from the aged rottenness of this slavish civilization, restores the primal elements of greatness, and unites in one mighty soul the attributes of the prophet and the king."

From this exultant soliloquy, Arbaces was awakened to attend the trial of the Athenian.

The worn and pallid cheek of his victim touched him less than the firmness of his nerves and the dauntlessness of his brow; for Arbaces was one who had little pity for what was unfortunate, but a strong sympathy for what was bold. The congenialities that bind us to others ever assimilate to the qualities of our own nature. The hero weeps less at the reverses of his enemy than at the fortitude with which he bears them. All of us are human; and Arbaces, criminal as he was, had his share of our common feelings and our mother-clay. Had he but obtained from Glaucus the written confession of his crime, which would, better than even the judgment of others, have lost him with Ione, and removed from Arbaces the chance of

future detection, the Egyptian would have strained every nerve to save his rival. Even now his hatred was over—his desire for revenge was slacked; he crushed his prey, not in enmity, but as an obstacle in his path. Yet was he not the less resolved, the less crafty and persevering, in the course he pursued, for the destruction of one whose doom was become necessary to the attainment of his objects; and while, with apparent reluctance and compassion, he gave against Glaucus the evidence which condemned him, he secretly, and through the medium of the priesthood, fomented that popular indignation which made an effectual obstacle to the pity of the senate. He had sought Julia; he had detailed to her the confession of Nydia; he had easily, therefore, lulled any scruple of conscience which might have led her to extenuate the offence of Glaucus by avowing her share in his frenzy; and the more readily, for her vain heart had loved the fame and the prosperity of Glaucus—not Glaucus himself; she felt no affection for a disgraced man—nay, she almost rejoiced in a disgrace that humbled the hated Ione. If Glaucus could not be her slave, neither could he be the adorer of her rival. This was sufficient consolation for any regret at his fate. Volatile and fickle, she began again to be moved by the sudden and earnest suit of Clodius, and was not willing to hazard the loss of an alliance with that base but high-born noble by any public exposure of her past weakness and immodest passion for another. All things then smiled upon Arbaces—all things frowned upon the Athenian.

CHAPTER XI.

NYDIA AFFECTS THE SORCERESS.

When the Thessalian found that Arbaces returned to her no more—when she was left, hour after hour, to all the torture of that miserable suspense which was rendered by blindness doubly intolerable, she began, with outstretched arms, to feel around her prison for some channel of escape; and finding the only entrance secure, she called aloud, and with the vehemence of a temper naturally violent, and now sharpened by impatient agony.

"Ho, girl!" said the slave in attendance, opening the door, "art thou bit by a scorpion? or thinkest thou that we are dying of silence here, and only to be preserved, like the infant Jupiter, by a hullabaloo?"

"Where is thy master? and wherefore am I caged here? I want air and liberty: let me go forth!"

"Alas! little one, hast thou not seen enough of Arbaces to know that his will is imperial? He hath ordered thee to be caged; and caged thou art, and I am thy keeper. Thou canst not have air and liberty; but thou mayst have what are much better things—food and wine."

"Proh Jupiter!" cried the girl, wringing her hands; "and why am I thus imprisoned? What can the great Arbaces want with so poor a thing as I am?"

"That I know not, unless it be to attend on thy new mistress, who has been brought hither this day."

"What! Ione here?"

"Yes, poor lady; she liked it little, I fear. Yet, by the Temple of Castor! Arbaces is a gallant man to the women. Thy lady is his ward, thou knowest."

"Wilt thou take me to her?"

"She is ill—frantic with rage and spite. Besides, I have no orders to do so; and I never think for myself. When Arbaces made me slave of these chambers,* he said, 'I have but one lesson to give thee;—while thou servest me, thou must have neither ears, eyes, nor thought; thou must be but one quality—obedience.'"

"But what harm is there in seeing Ione?"

"That I know not; but if thou wantest a companion, I am willing to talk to thee, little one, for I am solitary enough in my dull cubiculum. And, by the way, thou art Thessalian—knowest thou not some cunning amusement of knife and shears, some pretty trick of telling fortunes, as most of thy race do, in order to pass the time?"

"Tush, slave! hold thy peace! or, if thou wilt speak, what hast thou heard of the state of Glaucus?"

* In the houses of the great each suite of chambers had its peculiar slave.

"Why, my master has gone to the Athenian's trial; Glaucus will smart for it!"

"For what?"

"The murder of the priest Apæcides."

"Ha!" said Nydia, pressing her hands to her forehead, "something of this I have indeed heard, but understand not. Yet who will dare to touch a hair of his head?"

"That will the lion, I fear."

"Averting gods! what wickedness dost thou utter?"

"Why, only that, if he be found guilty, the lion, or maybe the tiger, will be his executioner."

Nydia leaped up, as if an arrow had entered her heart: she uttered a piercing scream; then, falling before the feet of the slave, she cried, in a tone that melted even his rude heart,—

"Ah! tell me thou jestest—thou utterest not the truth—speak, speak!"

"Why, by my faith, blind girl, I know nothing of the law; it may not be so bad as I say. But Arbaces is his accuser, and the people desire a victim for the arena. Cheer thee! But what hath the fate of the Athenian to do with thine?"

"No matter, no matter—he has been kind to me: thou knowest not, then, what they will do? Arbaces his accuser! O fate! The people—the people! Ah! *they* can look upon his face—who will be cruel to the Athenian?—Yet was not Love itself cruel to him?"

So saying, her head drooped upon her bosom: she sunk into silence; scalding tears flowed down her cheeks; and all the kindly efforts of the slave were unable either to console her or distract the absorption of her revery.

When his household cares obliged the ministrant to leave her room, Nydia began to re-collect her thoughts; Arbaces was the accuser of Glaucus; Arbaces had imprisoned her here; was not that a proof that her liberty might be serviceable to Glaucus? Yes, she was evidently inveigled into some snare; she was contributing to the destruction of her beloved! Oh, how she panted for release! Fortunately for her sufferings, all sense of pain became merged in the desire of escape; and as she began to revolve the possibility of deliverance, she grew calm and thoughtful. She possessed much of the craft of her sex, and it had been increased in her breast by her early servitude. What slave was ever destitute of cunning? She resolved to practise upon her keeper; and, calling suddenly to mind his superstitious query as to her Thessalian art, she hoped by that handle to work out some method of release. These doubts occupied her mind during the rest of the day and the long hours of night; and, accordingly, when Sosia visited her the following morning, she hastened to divert his garrulity into that channel in which it had before evinced a natural disposition to flow.

She was aware, however, that her only chance of escape was at night; and accordingly she was obliged, with a bitter pang at the delay, to defer till then her purposed attempt.

"The night," said she, "is the sole time in which we can well decipher the decrees of Fate—then it is thou must seek me. But what desirest thou to learn?"

"By Pollux! I should like to know as much as my master; but that is not to be expected. Let me know, at least, whether I shall save enough to purchase my freedom, or whether this Egyptian will give it me for nothing. He does such generous things sometimes. Next, supposing that be true, shall I possess myself of that snug taberna among the Myropolia* which I have long had in my eye? 'Tis a genteel trade that of a perfumer, and suits a retired slave who has something of a gentleman about him!"

"Ay! so you would have precise answers to those questions?—there are various ways of satisfying you. There is the Lithomanteia, or Speaking-stone, which answers your prayer with an infant's voice; but then we have not that precious stone with us—costly is it, and rare. Then there is the Gastromanteia, whereby the demon casts pale and deadly images upon water, prophetic of the future. But this art requires also glasses of a peculiar fashion, to contain the consecrated liquid, which we have not. I think, therefore, that the simplest method of satisfying your desire would be by the Magic of Air."

"I trust," said Sosia, tremulously, that

* The shops of the perfumers.

there is nothing very frightful in the operation? I have no love for apparitions."

"Fear not; thou wilt see nothing; thou wilt only hear by the bubbling of water whether or not thy suit prospers. First, then, be sure, from the rising of the evening star, that thou leavest the garden-gate somewhat open, so that the demon may feel himself invited to enter therein; and place fruits and water near the gate as a sign of hospitality; then, three hours after twilight, come here with a bowl of the coldest and purest water, and thou shalt learn all, according to the Thessalian lore my mother taught me. But forget not the garden-gate—all rests upon that; it must be open when you come, and for three hours previously."

"Trust me," replied the unsuspecting Sosia; "I know what a gentleman's feelings are when a door is shut in his face, as the cook-shop's hath been in mine many a day; and I know also, that a person of respectability, as a demon of course is, cannot but be pleased, on the other hand, with any little mark of courteous hospitality. Meanwhile, pretty one, here is thy morning's meal."

"And what of the trial?"

"Oh, the lawyers are still at it—talk, talk—it will last over till to-morrow."

"To-morrow?—you are sure of that?"

"So I hear."

"And Ione?"

"By Bacchus! she must be tolerably well, for she was strong enough to make my master stamp and bite his lip this morning. I saw him quit her apartment with a brow like a thunder-storm."

"Lodges she near this?"

"No—in the upper apartments. But I must not stay prating here longer.—*Vale!*"

CHAPTER XII.

A WASP VENTURES INTO THE SPIDER'S WEB.

The second night of the trial had set in; and it was nearly the time in which Sosia was to brave the dread Unknown, when there entered, at that very garden-gate which the slave had left ajar—not, indeed, one of the mysterious spirits of earth or air, but the heavy and most human form of Calenus, the priest of Isis. He scarcely noted the humble offerings of indifferent fruit, and still more indifferent wine, which the pious Sosia had deemed good enough for the invisible stranger they were intended to allure. "Some tribute," thought he, "to the garden god. By my father's head! if his deityship were never better served, he would do well to give up the godly profession. Ah! were it not for us priests, the gods would have a sad time of it. And now for Arbaces—I am treading a quicksand, but it ought to cover a mine. I have the Egyptian's life in my power—what will he value it at?"

As he thus soliloquized, he crossed through the open court into the peristyle, where a few lamps here and there broke upon the empire of the star-lit night; and, issuing from one of the chambers that bordered the colonnade, suddenly encountered Arbaces.

"Ho! Calenus—seekest thou me?" said the Egyptian; and there was a little embarrassment in his voice.

"Yes, wise Arbaces—I trust my visit is not unseasonable?"

"Nay—it was but this instant that my freedman Callias sneezed thrice at my right hand; I knew, therefore, some good fortune was in store for me—and lo! the gods have sent me Calenus."

"Shall we within to your chamber, Arbaces?"

"As you will; but the night is clear and balmy—I have some remains of languor yet lingering on me from my recent illness—the air refreshes me—let us walk in the garden—we are equally alone there."

"With all my heart," answered the priest; and the two *friends* passed slowly to one of the many terraces which, bordered by marble vases and sleeping flowers, intersected the garden.

"It is a lovely night," said Arbaces—"blue and beautiful as that on which, twenty years ago, the shores of Italy first broke upon my view. My Calenus, age creeps upon us—let us, at least, feel that we have lived."

"Thou, at least, mayst arrogate that boast," said Calenus, beating about, as it were, for an opportunity to communicate the secret which weighed upon him, and feeling his usual awe of Arbaces still more impres-

sively that night, from the quiet and friendly tone of dignified condescension which the Egyptian assumed—"Thou, at least, mayst arrogate that boast. Thou hast had countless wealth—a frame on whose close-woven fibres disease can find no space to enter—prosperous love—inexhaustible pleasure—and, even at this hour, triumphant revenge."

"Thou alludest to the Athenian. Ay, to-morrow's sun the fiat of his death will go forth. The senate does not relent. But thou mistakest; his death gives me no other gratification than that it releases me from a rival in the affections of Ione. I entertain no other sentiment of animosity against that unfortunate homicide."

"Homicide!" repeated Calenus, slowly and meaningly; and, halting as he spoke, he fixed his eyes upon Arbaces. The stars shone pale and steadily on the proud face of their prophet, but they betrayed there no change: the eyes of Calenus fell disappointed and abashed. He continued rapidly—"Homicide! it is well to charge him with that crime; but thou, of all men, knowest that he is innocent."

"Explain thyself," said Arbaces, coldly; for he had prepared himself for the hint his secret fears had foretold.

"Arbaces," answered Calenus, sinking his voice into a whisper, "I was in the sacred grove, sheltered by the chapel and the surrounding foliage. I overheard—I marked the whole. I saw thy weapon pierce the heart of Apæcides. I blame not the deed—it destroyed a foe and an apostate."

"Thou sawest the whole!" said Arbaces, dryly; "so I imagined—thou wert alone?"

"Alone!" returned Calenus, surprised at the Egyptian's calmness.

"And wherefore wert thou hid behind the chapel at that hour?"

"Because I had learned the conversion of Apæcides to the Christian faith—because I knew that on that spot he was to meet the fierce Olinthus—because they were to meet there to discuss plans for unveiling the sacred mysteries of our goddess to the people—and I was there to detect, in order to defeat them."

"Hast thou told living ear what thou didst witness?"

"No, my master; the secret is locked in thy servant's breast."

"What! even thy kinsman Burbo guesses it not? Come, the truth!"

"By the gods——"

"Hush! we know each other—what are the gods to us?"

"By the fear of thy vengeance, then,—no!"

"And why hast thou hitherto concealed from me this secret? Why hast thou waited till the eve of the Athenian's condemnation before thou hast ventured to tell me that Arbaces is a murderer? And, having tarried so long, why revealest thou now that knowledge?"

"Because—because——" stammered Calenus, coloring and in confusion.

"Because," interrupted Arbaces, with a gentle smile, and tapping the priest on the shoulder with a kindly and familiar gesture—"because, my Calenus—(see now, I will read thy heart, and explain its motives)—because thou didst wish thoroughly to commit and entangle me in the trial, so that I might have no loophole of escape; that I might stand firmly pledged to perjury and to malice, as well as to homicide; that having myself whetted the appetite of the populace to blood, no wealth, no power, could prevent my becoming their victim; and thou tellest me thy secret now, ere the trial be over and the innocent condemned, to show what a desperate web of villainy thy word to-morrow could destroy; to enhance in this, the ninth hour, the price of thy forbearance; to show that my own arts, in arousing the popular wrath, would, at thy witness, recoil upon myself; and that, if not for Glaucus, for *me* would gape the jaws of the lion! Is it not so?"

"Arbaces," replied Calenus, losing all the vulgar audacity of his natural character, "verily thou *art* a Magian; thou readest the heart as it were a scroll."

"It is my vocation," answered the Egyptian, laughing gently. "Well, then, forbear; and when all is over, I will make thee rich."

"Pardon me," said the priest, as the quick suggestion of that avarice, which was his master-passion, bade him trust no *future* chance of generosity; "pardon me; thou saidst right—we know each other. If thou wouldst have me silent, thou must pay some-

thing in advance, as an offer to Harpocrates.* If the rose, sweet emblem of discretion, is to take root firmly, water her this night with a stream of gold."

"Witty and poetical!" answered Arbaces, still in that bland voice which lulled and encouraged, when it ought to have alarmed and checked, his griping comrade. "Wilt thou not wait the morrow?"

"Why this delay? Perhaps, when I can no longer give my testimony without shame for not having given it ere the innocent man suffered, thou wilt forget my claim; and, indeed, thy present hesitation is a bad omen of thy future gratitude."

"Well, then, Calenus, what wouldst thou have me pay thee?"

"Thy life is very precious, and thy wealth is very great," returned the priest, grinning.

"Wittier and more witty. But speak out—what shall be the sum?"

"Arbaces, I have heard that in thy secret treasury below, beneath those rude Oscan arches which prop thy stately halls, thou hast piles of gold, of vases, and of jewels, which might rival the receptacles of the wealth of the deified Nero. Thou mayst easily spare out of those piles enough to make Calenus among the richest priests of Pompeii, and yet not miss the loss."

"Come, Calenus," said Arbaces, winningly, and with a frank and generous air, "thou art an old friend and hast been a faithful servant. Thou canst have no wish to take away my life, nor I a desire to stint thy reward: thou shalt descend with me to that treasury thou referrest to; thou shalt feast thine eyes with the blaze of uncounted gold and the sparkle of priceless gems; and thou shalt, for thy own reward, bear away with thee this night as much as thou canst conceal beneath thy robes. Nay, when thou hast once seen what thy friend possesses, thou wilt learn how foolish it would be to injure one who has so much to bestow. When Glaucus is no more, thou shalt pay the treasury another visit. Speak I frankly and as a friend?"

"Oh, greatest, best of men!" cried Calenus, almost weeping with joy, "canst thou thus forgive my injurious doubts of thy justice, thy generosity?"

"Hush! one other turn, and we will descend to the Oscan arches."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SLAVE CONSULTS THE ORACLE.—THEY WHO BLIND THEMSELVES THE BLIND MAY FOOL.—TWO NEW PRISONERS MADE IN ONE NIGHT.

IMPATIENTLY Nydia awaited the arrival of the no less anxious Sosia. Fortifying his courage by plentiful potations of a better liquor than that provided for the demon, the credulous ministrant stole into the blind girl's chamber.

"Well, Sosia, and art thou prepared? Hast thou the bowl of pure water?"

"Verily, yes: but I tremble a little. You are sure I shall not see the demon? I have heard that those gentlemen are by no means of a handsome person or a civil demeanor."

"Be assured! And hast thou left the garden-gate gently open?"

"Yes; and placed some beautiful nuts and apples on a little table close by?"

"That's well. And the gate is open now, so that the demon may pass through it?"

"Surely it is."

"Well, then, open this door; there—leave it just ajar. And now, Sosia, give me the lamp."

"What! you will not extinguish it?"

"No; but I must breathe my spell over its ray. There is a spirit in fire. Seat thyself."

The slave obeyed; and Nydia, after bending for some moments silently over the lamp, rose, and in a low voice chanted the following rude

INVOCATION TO THE SPECTRE OF THE AIR.

"Loved alike by Air and Water
Aye must be Thessalia's daughter;
To us, Olympian hearts, are given
Spells that draw the moon from heaven.
All that Egypt's learning wrought—
All that Persia's Magian taught—
Won from song, or wrung from flowers,
Or whisper'd low by fiend—are ours.

* The God of Silence.

Spectre of the viewless air,
Hear the blind Thessalian's prayer;
By Erictho's art, that shed
Dews of life when life was fled;—
By lone Ithaca's wise king,
Who could wake the crystal spring
To thy voice of prophecy;
By the lost Eurydice,
Summon'd from the shadowy throng,
At the muse-son's magic song—
By the Colchian's awful charms,
When fair-hair'd Jason left her arms;—
Spectre of the airy halls,
One who owns thee duly calls!
Breathe along the brimming bowl,
And instruct the fearful soul
In the shadowy things that lie
Dark in dim futurity.
Come, wild demon of the air,
Answer to thy votary's prayer!
Come! oh, come!

And no god on heaven or earth—
Not the Paphian Queen of Mirth,
Nor the vivid Lord of Light,
Nor the triple Maid of Night,
Nor the Thunderer's self, shall be
Blest and honor'd more than thee!
Come! oh, come!"

"The spectre *is* certainly coming," said Sosia. "I feel him running along my hair!"

"Place thy bowl of water on the ground. Now, then, give me thy napkin, and let me fold up thy face and eyes."

"Ay! that's always the custom with these charms. Not so tight, though; gently—gently!"

"There—thou canst not see?"

"See, by Jupiter! No! nothing but darkness."

"Address, then, to the spectre whatever question thou wouldst ask him, in a low-whispered voice, three times. If thy question is answered in the affirmative, thou wilt hear the water ferment and bubble before the demon breathes upon it; if in the negative, the water will be quite silent."

"But you will not play any trick with the water, eh?"

"Let me place the bowl under thy feet—so. Now thou wilt perceive that I cannot touch it without thy knowledge."

"Very fair. Now, then, O Bacchus! befriend me. Thou knowest that I have always loved thee better than all the other gods, and I will dedicate to thee that silver cup I stole last year from the burly carptor (butler), if thou wilt but befriend me with this water-loving demon. And thou, O Spirit! listen and hear me. Shall I be enabled to purchase my freedom next year? Thou knowest; for, as thou livest in the air, the birds* have doubtless acquainted thee with every secret of this house,—thou knowest that I have filched and pilfered all that I honestly—that is, safely—could lay finger upon for the last three years, and I yet want two thousand sesterces of the full sum. Shall I be able, O good Spirit! to make up the deficiency in the course of this year? Speak—Ha! does the water bubble? No; all is still as a tomb.—Well, then, if not this year, in two years?—Ah! I hear something; the demon is scratching at the door; he'll be here presently.—In two years, my good fellow: come now, two;—that's a very reasonable time. What! dumb still! Two years and a half—three—four? Ill fortune to you, friend demon! You are not a lady, that's clear, or you would not keep silence so long. Five—six—sixty years? and may Pluto seize you! I'll ask no more." And Sosia, in a rage, kicked down the water over his legs. He then, after much fumbling, and more cursing, managed to extricate his head from the napkin in which it was completely folded—stared round—and discovered that he was in the dark.

"What, ho! Nydia! the lamp is gone. Ah, traitress! and thou art gone too; but I'll catch thee—thou shalt smart for this!"

The slave groped his way to the door; it was bolted from without: he was a prisoner instead of Nydia. What could he do? He did not dare to knock loud—to call out—lest Arbaces should overhear him, and discover how he had been duped; and Nydia, meanwhile, had probably already gained the garden-gate, and was fast on her escape.

"But," thought he, "she will go home, or, at least, be somewhere in the city. To-morrow, at dawn, when the slaves are at work in the peristyle, I can make myself heard; then I can go forth and seek her. I shall be sure to find and bring her back before Arbaces knows a word of the matter. Ah! that's the best plan. Little traitress, my fingers itch at thee: and to leave only a

* Who are supposed to know all secrets. The same superstition prevails in the East, and is not without example, also, in our northern legends.

bowl of water, too! Had it been wine, it would have been some comfort."

While Sosia, thus entrapped, was lamenting his fate, and revolving his schemes to repossess himself of Nydia, the blind girl, with that singular precision and dexterous rapidity of motion, which, we have before observed, was peculiar to her, had passed lightly along the peristyle, threaded the opposite passage that led into the garden, and, with a beating heart, was about to proceed towards the gate, when she suddenly heard the sound of approaching steps, and distinguished the dreaded voice of Arbaces himself. She paused for a moment in doubt and terror; then suddenly it flashed across her recollection that there was another passage which was little used except for the admission of the fair partakers of the Egyptian's secret revels, and which wound along the basement of that massive fabric towards a door which also communicated with the garden. By good fortune it might be open. At that thought, she hastily retraced her steps, descended the narrow stairs at the right, and was soon at the entrance of the passage. Alas! the door at the entrance was closed and secured.

While she was yet assuring himself that it was indeed locked, she heard behind her the voice of Calenus, and, a moment after, that of Arbaces in low reply. She could not stay there; they were probably passing to that very door. She sprang onward, and felt herself in unknown ground. The air grew damp and chill; this reassured her. She thought she might be among the cellars of the luxurious mansion, or, at least, in some rude spot not likely to be visited by its haughty lord, when, again, her quick ear caught steps and the sound of voices. On, on, she hurried, extending her arms, which now frequently encountered pillars of thick and massive form. With a tact doubled in acuteness by her fear, she escaped these perils, and continued her way, the air growing more and more damp as she proceeded; yet, still, as she ever and anon paused for breath, she heard the advancing steps and the indistinct murmur of voices. At length she was abruptly stopped by a wall that seemed the limit of her path. Was there no spot in which she could hide? No aperture? no cavity? There was none! She stopped, and wrung her hands in despair; then, again, nerved as the voices neared upon her, she hurried on by the side of the wall; and coming suddenly against one of the sharp buttresses that here and there jutted boldly forth, she fell to the ground. Though much bruised, her senses did not leave her; she uttered no cry; nay, she hailed the accident that had led her to something like a screen; and creeping close up to the angle formed by the buttress, so that on one side at least she was sheltered from view, she gathered her slight and small form into its smallest compass, and breathlessly awaited her fate.

Meanwhile Arbaces and the priest were taking their way to that secret chamber whose stores were so vaunted by the Egyptian. They were in a vast subterranean atrium, or hall; the low roof was supported by short, thick pillars, of an architecture far remote from the Grecian graces of that luxuriant period. The single and pale lamp, which Arbaces bore, shed but an imperfect ray over the bare and rugged walls, in which the huge stones, without cement, were fitted curiously and uncouthly into each other. The disturbed reptiles glared dully on the intruders, and then crept into the shadow of the walls.

Calenus shivered as he looked around and breathed the damp, unwholesome air.

"Yet," said Arbaces, with a smile, perceiving his shudder, "it is these rude abodes that furnish the luxuries of the halls above. They are like the laborers of the world,—we despise their ruggedness, yet they feed the very pride that disdains them."

"And whither goes yon dim gallery to the left?" asked Calenus; "in this depth of gloom it seems without limit, as if winding into Hades."

"On the contrary, it does but conduct to the upper day," answered Arbaces, carelessly; "it is to the right that we steer to our bourn."

The hall, like many in the more habitable regions of Pompeii, branched off at the extremity into two wings or passages; the length of which, not really great, was to the eye considerably exaggerated by the sullen gloom against which the lamp so faintly

struggled. To the right of these *alæ* the two comrades now directed their steps.

"The gay Glaucus will be lodged to-morrow in apartments not much drier, and far less spacious than this," said Calenus, as they passed by the very spot where, completely wrapped in the shadow of the broad, projecting buttress, cowered the Thessalian.

"Ay, but then he will have dry room, and ample enough, in the arena on the following day. And to think," continued Arbaces, slowly, and very deliberately—"to think that a word of thine could save him, and consign Arbaces to his doom!"

"That word shall never be spoken," said Calenus.

"Right, my Calenus! it never shall," returned Arbaces, familiarly leaning his arm on the priest's shoulder; "and, now, halt—we are at the door."

The light trembled against a small door deep set in the wall, and guarded strongly by many plates and bindings of iron, that intersected the rough and dark wood. From his girdle Arbaces now drew a small ring, holding three or four short but strong keys. Oh, how beat the griping heart of Calenus, as he heard the rusty wards growl, as if resenting the admission to the treasures they guarded!

"Enter, my friend," said Arbaces, "while I hold the lamp on high, that thou mayst glut thine eyes on the yellow heaps."

The impatient Calenus did not wait to be twice invited; he hastened towards the aperture.

Scarce had he crossed the threshold when the strong hand of Arbaces plunged him forwards.

"*The word shall never be spoken!*" said the Egyptian, with a loud, exultant laugh, and closed the door upon the priest.

Calenus had been precipitated down several steps, but not feeling at the moment the pain of his fall, he sprung up again to the door, and beating at it fiercely with his clenched fist, he cried aloud in what seemed more a beast's howl than a human voice, so keen was his agony and despair: "Oh, release me, release me, and I will ask no gold!"

The words but imperfectly penetrated the massive door, and Arbaces again laughed. Then, stamping his foot violently, rejoined, perhaps to give vent to his long-stifled passions,—

"All the gold of Dalmatia," cried he, "will not buy thee a crust of bread. Starve, wretch! thy dying groans will never wake even the echo of these vast halls: nor will the air ever reveal, as thou gnawest, in thy desperate famine, thy flesh from thy bones, that so perishes the man who threatened, and could have undone, Arbaces! Farewell!"

"Oh, pity—mercy! Inhuman villain! was it for this——"

The rest of the sentence was lost to the ear of Arbaces as he passed backward along the dim hall. A toad, plump and bloated, lay unmoving before his path; the rays of the lamp fell upon its unshaped hideousness and red upward eye. Arbaces turned aside that he might not harm it.

"Thou art loathsome and obscene," he muttered, "but thou canst not injure me; therefore thou art safe in my path."

The cries of Calenus, dulled and choked by the barrier that confined him, yet faintly reached the ear of the Egyptian. He paused and listened intently.

"This is unfortunate," thought he; "for I cannot sail till that voice is dumb for ever. My stores and treasures lie, not in yon dungeon, it is true, but in the opposite wing. My slaves, as they move them, must not hear his voice. But what fear of that? In three days, if he still survive, his accents, by my father's beard, must be weak enough then!—no, they could not pierce even through his tomb. By Isis, it is cold!—I long for a deep draught of the spiced Falernian."

With that the remorseless Egyptian drew his gown closer round him, and resought the upper air.

CHAPTER XIV.

NYDIA ACCOSTS CALENUS.

WHAT words of terror, yet of hope, had Nydia overheard! The next day Glaucus was to be condemned; yet there lived one who could save him, and adjudge Arbaces to his doom, and that one breathed within a

few steps of her hiding-place! She caught his cries and shrieks—his imprecations—his prayers, though they fell choked and muffled on her ear. He was imprisoned, but she knew the secret of his cell: could she but escape—could she but seek the prætor, he might yet in time be given to light, and preserve the Athenian. Her emotions almost stifled her; her brain reeled—she felt her sense give way—but by a violent effort she mastered herself; and, after listening intently for several minutes, till she was convinced that Arbaces had left the space to solitude and herself, she crept on as her ear guided her to the very door that had closed upon Calenus. Here she more distinctly caught his accents of terror and despair. Thrice she attempted to speak, and thrice her voice failed to penetrate the folds of the heavy door. At length finding the lock, she applied her lips to its small aperture, and the prisoner distinctly heard a soft tone breathe his name.

His blood curdled—his hair stood on end. That awful solitude, what mysterious and preternatural being could penetrate! "Who's there?" he cried, in new alarm; "what spectre—what dread *larva*, calls upon the lost Calenus?"

"Priest," replied the Thessalian, "unknown to Arbaces, I have been, by the permission of the gods, a witness to his perfidy. If I myself can escape from these walls, I may save thee. But let thy voice reach my ear through this narrow passage, and answer what I ask."

"Ah, blessed spirit," said the priest, exultingly, and obeying the suggestion of Nydia, "save me, and I will sell the very cups on the altar to pay thy kindness."

"I want not thy gold—I want thy secret. Did I hear aright?—Canst thou save the Athenian Glaucus from the charge against his life?"

"I can—I can!—therefore—(may the Furies blast the foul Egyptian!)—hath Arbaces snared me thus, and left me to starve and rot?"

"They accuse the Athenian of murder; canst thou disprove the accusation?"

"Only free me, and the proudest head of Pompeii is not more safe than his. I saw the deed done—I saw Arbaces strike the blow; I can convict the true murderer and acquit the innocent man. But if I perish, he dies also. Dost thou interest thyself for him? Oh, blessed stranger, in my heart is the urn which condemns or frees him!"

"And thou wilt give full evidence of what thou knowest?"

"Will!—Oh! were hell at my feet—yes! Revenge on the false Egyptian!—revenge! revenge! revenge!"

As through his ground teeth Calenus shrieked forth those last words, Nydia felt that in his worst passions was her certainty of his justice to the Athenian. Her heart beat: was it—was it to be her proud destiny to preserve her idolized—her adored? "Enough," said she; "the powers that conducted me hither will carry me through all. Yes, I feel that I shall deliver thee. Wait in patience and hope."

"But be cautious, be prudent, sweet stranger. Attempt not to appeal to Arbaces—he is marble. Seek the prætor—say what thou knowest—obtain his writ of search; bring soldiers, and smiths of cunning—these locks are wondrous strong! Time flies—I may starve—starve! if you are not quick! Go—go! Yet stay—it is horrible to be alone!—the air is like a charnel—and the scorpions—ha! and the pale larvæ! Oh! stay, stay!"

"Nay," said Nydia, terrified by the terror of the priest, and anxious to confer with herself,—"nay, for thy sake, I must depart. Take Hope for thy companion—farewell!"

So saying, she glided away, and felt with extended arms along the pillared space until she had gained the farther end of the hall and the mouth of the passage that led to the upper air. But there she paused; she felt that it would be more safe to wait awhile, until the night was so far blended with the morning that the whole house would be buried in sleep, and so that she might quit it unobserved. She, therefore, once more laid herself down, and counted the weary moments. In her sanguine heart, joy was the predominant emotion. Glaucus was in deadly peril—but *she* should save him!

CHAPTER XV.

ARBACES AND IONE.—NYDIA GAINS THE GARDEN.—WILL SHE ESCAPE AND SAVE THE ATHENIAN?

When Arbaces had warmed his veins by large draughts of that spiced and perfumed wine so valued by the luxurious, he felt more than usually elated and exultant of heart. There is a pride in triumphant ingenuity, not less felt, perhaps, though its object be guilty. Our vain human nature hugs itself in the consciousness of superior craft and self-obtained success—afterwards comes the horrible reaction of remorse.

But remorse was not a feeling which Arbaces was likely ever to experience for the fate of the base Calenus. He swept from his remembrance the thought of the priest's agonies and lingering death: he felt only that a great danger was passed, and a possible foe silenced; all left to him now would be to account to the priesthood for the disappearance of Calenus; and this he imagined it would not be difficult to do. Calenus had often been employed by him in various religious missions to the neighboring cities. On some such errand he could now assert that he had been sent, with offerings to the shrines of Isis at Herculaneum and Neapolis, placatory of the goddess for the recent murder of her priest Apæcides. When Calenus had expired, his body might be thrown, previous to the Egyptian's departure from Pompeii, into the deep stream of the Sarnus; and when discovered, suspicion would probably fall upon the Nazarene atheists, as an act of revenge for the death of Olinthus at the arena. After rapidly running over these plans for screening himself, Arbaces dismissed at once from his mind all recollection of the wretched priest; and, animated by the success which had lately crowned all his schemes, he surrendered his thoughts to Ione. The last time he had seen her, she had driven him from her presence by a reproachful and bitter scorn, which his arrogant nature was unable to endure. He now felt emboldened once more to renew that interview; for his passion for her was like similar feelings in other men—it made him restless for her presence, even though in that presence he was exasperated and humbled. From delicacy to her grief, he laid not aside his dark and unfestive robes, but, renewing the perfumes on his raven locks, and arranging his tunic in its most becoming folds, he sought the chamber of the Neapolitan. Accosting the slave in attendance without, he inquired if Ione had yet retired to rest; and learning that she was still up, and unusually quiet and composed, he ventured into her presence. He found his beautiful ward sitting before a small table, and leaning her face upon both her hands in the attitude of thought. Yet the expression of the face itself possessed not its wonted bright and Psyche-like expression of sweet intelligence; the lips were apart—the eye vacant and unheeding—and the long dark hair, falling neglected and dishevelled upon her neck, gave by the contrast additional paleness to a cheek which had already lost the roundness of its contour.

Arbaces gazed upon her a moment ere he advanced. She, too, lifted up her eyes; and when she saw who was the intruder, shut them with an expression of pain, but did not stir.

"Ah!" said Arbaces, in a low and earnest tone, as he respectfully, nay, humbly, advanced and seated himself at a little distance from the table—"Ah! that my death could remove thy hatred, then would I gladly die! Thou wrongest me, Ione; but I will bear the wrong without a murmur, only let me see thee sometimes. Chide, reproach, scorn me, if thou wilt—I will teach myself to bear it. And is not even thy bitterest tone sweeter to me than the music of the most artful lute? In thy silence the world seems to stand still—a stagnation curdles up the veins of the earth—there is no earth, no life, without the light of thy countenance and the melody of thy voice."

"Give me back my brother and my betrothed," said Ione, in a calm and imploring tone, and a few large tears rolled unheeded down her cheeks.

"Would that I could restore the one and save the other!" returned Arbaces, with apparent emotion. "Yes; to make thee happy I would renounce my ill-fated love, and gladly join thy hand to the Athenian's. Perhaps he will yet come unscathed from his

trial—(Arbaces had prevented her learning that the trial had already commenced); if so, thou art free to judge or condemn him thyself. And think not, O Ione! that I would follow thee longer with a prayer of love. I know it is in vain. Suffer me only to weep—to mourn with thee. Forgive a violence deeply repented, and that shall offend no more. Let me be to thee only what I once was—a friend, a father, a protector. Ah, Ione! spare me and forgive."

"I forgive thee. Save but Glaucus, and I will renounce him. O mighty Arbaces! thou art powerful in evil or in good: save the Athenian, and the poor Ione will never see him more." As she spoke, she rose with weak and trembling limbs, and falling at his feet, she clasped his knees; "Oh! if thou really lovest me—if thou art human—remember my father's ashes, remember my childhood, think of all the hours we passed happily together, and save my Glaucus!"

Strange convulsions shook the frame of the Egyptian; his features worked fearfully—he turned his face aside, and said, in a hollow voice, "If I could save him, even now, I would; but the Roman law is stern and sharp. Yet if I *could* succeed—if I *could* rescue and set him free—wouldst thou be mine—my bride?"

"Thine?" repeated Ione, rising: "thine!—thy bride? My brother's blood is unavenged: *who* slew him? O, Nemesis! can I even sell, for the life of Glaucus, thy solemn trust? Arbaces—*thine?* Never."

"Ione, Ione!" cried Arbaces, passionately,—"why these mysterious words?—why dost thou couple my name with the thought of thy brother's death?"

"My dreams couple it—and dreams are from the gods."

"Vain fantasies all! Is it for a dream that thou wouldst wrong the innocent, and hazard thy sole chance of saving thy lover's life?"

"Hear me!" said Ione, speaking firmly, and with a deliberate and solemn voice: "if Glaucus be saved by thee, I will never be borne to his home a bride. But I cannot master the horror of other rites: I cannot wed with thee. Interrupt me not; but mark me, Arbaces!—if Glaucus die, on that same day I baffle thine arts, and leave to thy love only my dust! Yes,—thou mayst put the knife and the poison from my reach—thou mayst imprison—thou mayst chain me, but the brave soul resolved to escape is never without means. These hands, naked and unarmed though they be, shall tear away the bonds of life. Fetter them, and these lips shall firmly refuse the air. Thou art learned—thou hast read how women have died rather than meet dishonor. If Glaucus perish, I will not unworthily linger behind him. By all the gods of the heaven, and the ocean, and the earth, I devote myself to death! I have said!"

High, proud, dilating in her stature like one inspired, the air and voice of Ione struck an awe into the breast of her listener.

"Brave heart!" said he, after a short pause; "thou art indeed worthy to be mine. Oh! that I should have dreamt of such a partner in my lofty destinies, and never found it but in thee! Ione," he continued rapidly, "dost thou not see that we are born for each other? Canst thou not recognize something kindred to thine own energy—thine own courage—in this high and self-dependent soul? We were formed to unite our sympathies—formed to breathe a new spirit into this hackneyed and gross world—formed for the mighty ends which my soul, sweeping down the gloom of time, foresees with a prophet's vision. With a resolution equal to thine own, I defy thy threats of an inglorious suicide. I hail thee as my own! Queen of climes undarkened by the eagle's wing, unravaged by his beak, I bow before thee in homage and in awe—but I claim thee in worship and in love! Together will we cross the ocean—together will we found our realm; and far distant ages shall acknowledge the long race of kings born from the marriage-bed of Arbaces and Ione!"

"Thou ravest! These mystic declamations are suited rather to some palsied crone selling charms in the market-place than to the wise Arbaces. Thou hast heard my resolution,—it is fixed as the Fates themselves. Orcus has heard my vow, and it is written in the book of the unforgetful Hades. Atone, then, O Arbaces!—atone the past: convert hatred into regard—vengeance into gratitude; preserve one who shall never be thy rival. These are acts suited to thy orig-

inal nature, which gives forth sparks of something high and noble. They weigh in the scales of the Kings of Death: they turn the balance on that day when the disembodied soul stands shivering and dismayed between Tartarus and Elysium: they gladden the heart in life, better and longer than the reward of a momentary passion. Oh, Arbaces! hear me, and be swayed!"

"Enough, Ione. All that I can do for Glaucus shall be done; but blame me not if I fail. Inquire of my foes, even, if I have not sought, if I do not seek, to turn aside the sentence from his head; and judge me accordingly. Sleep then, Ione. Night wanes; I leave thee to its rest,—and mayst thou have kinder dreams of one who has no existence but in thine."

Without waiting a reply, Arbaces hastily withdrew; afraid, perhaps, to trust himself farther to the passionate prayer of Ione, which racked him with jealousy, even while it touched him to compassion. But compassion itself came too late. Had Ione even pledged him her hand as his reward, he could not now—his evidence given—the populace excited—have saved the Athenian. Still, made sanguine by his very energy of mind, he threw himself on the chances of the future, and believed he should yet triumph over the woman that had so entangled his passions.

As his attendants assisted to unrobe him for the night, the thought of Nydia flashed across him. He felt it was necessary that Ione should never learn of her lover's frenzy, lest it might excuse his imputed crime; and it was possible that her attendants might inform her that Nydia was under his roof, and she might desire to see her. As this idea crossed him, he turned to one of his freedmen,—

"Go, Callias," said he, "forthwith to Sosia, and tell him, that on no pretence is he to suffer the blind slave Nydia out of her chamber. But, stay—first seek those on attendance upon my ward, and caution them not to inform her that the blind girl is under my roof. Go—quick!"

The freedman hastened to obey. After having discharged his commission with respect to Ione's attendants, he sought the worthy Sosia. He found him not in the little cell which was apportioned for his cubiculum; he called his name aloud, and from Nydia's chamber, close at hand, he heard the voice of Sosia reply,—

"Oh, Callias, is it you that I hear?—the gods be praised! Open the door, I pray you!"

Callias withdrew the bolt, and the rueful face of Sosia hastily obtruded itself.

"What!—in the chamber with that young girl, Sosia! *Proh pudor!* Are there not fruits ripe enough on the wall, but that thou must tamper with such green——"

"Name not the little witch!" interrupted Sosia impatiently; "she will be my ruin!" And he forthwith imparted to Callias the history of the Air Demon and the escape of the Thessalian.

"Hang thyself, then, unhappy Sosia! I am just charged from Arbaces with a message to thee;—on no account art thou to suffer her, even for a moment, from that chamber!"

"*Me miserum!*" exclaimed the slave. "What can I do?—by this time she may have visited half Pompeii. But to-morrow I will undertake to catch her in her old haunts. Keep but my counsel, my dear Callias."

"I will do all that friendship can, consistent with my own safety. But are you sure she has left the house?—she may be hiding here yet."

"How is that possible? She could easily have gained the garden; and the door, as I told thee, was open."

"Nay, not so; for, at that very hour thou specifiest, Arbaces was in the garden with the priest Calenus. I went there in search of some herbs for my master's bath to-morrow. I saw the table set out; but the gate, I am sure, was shut: depend upon it, that Calenus entered by the garden, and naturally closed the door after him."

"But it was not locked."

"Yes; for I myself, angry at a negligence which might expose the bronzes in the peristyle to the mercy of any robber, turned the key, took it away, and—as I did not see the proper slave to whom to give it, or I should have rated him finely—here it actually is, still in my girdle."

"Oh, merciful Bacchus! I did not pray

to thee in vain, after all. Let us not lose a moment! Let us to the garden instantly—she may yet be there!"

The good-natured Callias consented to assist the slave; and, after vainly searching the chambers at hand, and the recesses of the peristyle, they entered the garden.

It was about this time that Nydia had resolved to quit her hiding-place, and venture forth on her way. Lightly, tremulously, holding her breath, which ever and anon broke forth in quick convulsive gasps,—now gliding by the flower-wreathed columns that bordered the peristyle—now darkening the still moonshine that fell over its tessellated centre—now ascending the terrace of the garden—now gliding amidst the gloomy and breathless trees, she gained the fatal door—to find it locked! We have all seen that expression of pain, of uncertainty, of fear, which a sudden disappointment of touch, if I may use the expression, casts over the face of the blind. But what words can paint the intolerable woe, the sinking of the whole heart, which was now visible on the features of the Thessalian? Again and again her small, quivering hands wandered to and fro the inexorable door. Poor thing that thou wert! in vain had been all thy noble courage, thy innocent craft, thy doublings to escape the hound and huntsman! Within but a few yards from thee, laughing at thy endeavors—thy despair—knowing thou wert now their own, and watching with cruel patience their own moment to seize their prey—thou art saved from seeing thy pursuers!

"Hush, Callias!—let her go on. Let us see what she will do when she has convinced herself that the door is honest."

"Look! she raises her face to the heavens—she mutters—she sinks down despondent! No! by Pollux, she has some new scheme! She will not resign herself! By Jupiter, a tough spirit! See, she springs up—she retraces her steps—she thinks of some other chance! I advise thee, Sosia, to delay no longer: seize her ere she quit the garden,—now!"

"Ah! runaway! I have thee—eh?" said Sosia, seizing upon the unhappy Nydia.

As a hare's last *human* cry in the fangs of the dogs—as the sharp voice of terror uttered by a sleep-walker suddenly awakened—broke the shriek of the blind girl, when she felt the abrupt gripe of her jailer. It was a shriek of such utter agony, such entire despair, that it might have rung hauntingly in your ears for ever. She felt as if the last plank of the sinking Glaucus were torn from his clasp. It had been a suspense of life and death; and death had now won the game.

"Gods! that cry will alarm the house! Arbaces sleeps full lightly. Gag her!" cried Callias.

"Ah! here is the very napkin with which the young witch conjured away my reason! Come, that's right; now thou art dumb as well as blind."

And, catching the light weight in his arms, Sosia soon gained the house, and reached the chamber from which Nydia had escaped. There, removing the gag, he left her to a solitude so racked and terrible, that out of Hades its anguish could scarcely be exceeded.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SORROW OF BOON COMPANIONS FOR OUR AFFLICTIONS.—THE DUNGEON AND ITS VICTIMS.

It was now late on the third and last day of the trial of Glaucus and Olinthus. A few hours after the court had broke up and judgment been given, a small party of the fashionable youth at Pompeii were assembled round the fastidious board of Lepidus.

"So, Glaucus denies his crime to the last?" said Clodius.

"Yes; but the testimony of Arbaces was convincing; he saw the blow given," answered Lepidus.

"What could have been the cause?"

"Why the priest was a gloomy and sullen fellow. He probably rated Glaucus soundly about his gay life and gaming habits, and ultimately swore he would not consent to his marriage with Ione. High words arose; Glaucus seems to have been full of the passionate god, and struck in sudden exasperation. The excitement of wine, the desperation of abrupt remorse, brought on the delirium under which he suffered for some

days; and I can readily imagine, poor fellow! that, yet confused by that delirium, he is even now unconscious of the crime he committed! Such, at least, is the shrewd conjecture of Arbaces, who seems to have been most kind and forbearing in his testimony."

"Yes; he has made himself generally popular by it. But, in consideration of these extenuating circumstances, the senate should have relaxed the sentence."

"And they *would* have done so, but for the people; but *they* were outrageous. The priest had spared no pains to excite them; and they imagined—the ferocious brutes!—because Glaucus was a rich man and a gentleman, that he was likely to escape; and therefore they were inveterate against him, and doubly resolved upon his sentence. It seems, by some accident or other, that he was never formally enrolled as a Roman citizen; and thus the senate is deprived of the power to resist the people, though, after all, there was but a majority of three against him. Ho! the Chian!"

"He looks sadly altered; but how composed and fearless!"

"Ay, we shall see if his firmness will last over to-morrow. But what merit in courage, when that atheistical hound, Olinthus, manifested the same?"

"The blasphemer! Yes," said Lepidus, with pious wrath, "no wonder that one of the decurions was, but two days ago, struck dead by lightning in a serene sky.* The gods feel vengeance against Pompeii while the vile desecrator is alive within its walls."

"Yet so lenient was the senate, that had he but expressed his penitence, and scattered a few grains of incense on the altar of Cybele, he would have been let off. I doubt whether these Nazarenes, had they the state religion, would be as tolerant to us, supposing we had kicked down the image of their Deity, blasphemed their rites, and denied their faith."

"They give Glaucus one chance, in consideration of the circumstances; they allow him, against the lion, the use of the same stilus wherewith he smote the priest."

"Hast thou seen the lion? hast thou looked at his teeth and fangs, and wilt thou call *that* a chance? Why, sword and buckler would be mere reed and papyrus against the rush of the mighty beast! No, I think the true mercy has been, not to leave him long in suspense; and it was therefore fortunate for him that our benign laws are slow to pronounce, but swift to execute; and that the games of the amphitheatre had been, by a sort of providence, so long since fixed for to-morrow. He who awaits death dies twice."

"As for the atheist," said Clodius, "he is to cope the grim tiger naked-handed. Well, these combats are past betting on. Who will take the odds?"

A peal of laughter announced the ridicule of the question.

"Poor Clodius!" said the host; "to lose a friend is something; but to find no one to bet on the chance of his escape is a worse misfortune to thee."

"Why, it is provoking; it would have been some consolation to him and to me to think he was useful to the last."

"The people," said the grave Pansa, "are all delighted with the result. They were so much afraid the sports at the amphitheatre would go off without a criminal for the beasts; and now, to get two *such* criminals is indeed a joy for the poor fellows! They work hard; they ought to have some amusement."

"There speaks the popular Pansa, who never moves without a string of clients as long as an Indian triumph. He is always prating about the people. Gods! he will end by being a Gracchus!"

"Certainly I am no insolent patrician," said Pansa, with a generous air.

"Well," observed Lepidus, "it would have been assuredy dangerous to have been merciful at the eve of a beast-fight. If ever *I*, though a Roman bred and born, come to be tried, pray Jupiter there may be either no beasts in the *vivaria*, or plenty of criminals in the jail."

"And pray," said one of the party, "what has become of the poor girl whom Glaucus was to have married? A widow without being a bride—that is hard!"

"Oh," returned Clodius, "she is safe un-

* Pliny says, that, immediately before the eruption of Vesuvius, one of the decuriones municipales was —though the heaven was unclouded—struck dead by lightning.

der the protection of her guardian, Arbaces. It was natural she should go to him when she had lost both lover and brother."

"By sweet Venus, Glaucus was fortunate among the women! They say the rich Julia was in love with him."

"A mere fable, my friend," said Clodius, coxcombically; "I was with her to-day. If any feeling of the sort she ever conceived, I flatter myself that *I* have consoled her."

"Hush, gentlemen!" said Pansa; "do you not know that Clodius is employed at the house of Diomed in blowing hard at the torch? It begins to burn, and will soon shine bright on the shrine of Hymen."

"Is it so?" said Lepidus. "What! Clodius become a married man?—Fie!"

"Never fear," answered Clodius; "old Diomed is delighted at the notion of marrying his daughter to a nobleman, and will come down largely with the sesterces. You will see that I shall not lock them up in the atrium. It will be a white day for his jolly friends when Clodius marries an heiress."

"Say you so?" cried Lepidus; "come, then, a full cup to the health of the fair Julia!"

While such was the conversation—one not discordant to the tone of mind common among the dissipated of that day, and which might, perhaps, a century ago, have found an echo in the looser circles of Paris—while such, I say, was the conversation in the gaudy triclinium of Lepidus, far different the scene which scowled before the young Athenian.

After his condemnation, Glaucus was admitted no more to the gentle guardianship of Sallust, the only friend of his distress. He was led along the forum till the guards stopped at a small door by the side of the temple of Jupiter. You may see the place still. The door opened in the centre in a somewhat singular fashion, revolving round on its hinges, as it were, like a modern turnstile, so as only to leave half the threshold open at the same time. Through this narrow aperture they thrust the prisoner, placed before him a loaf and a pitcher of water, and left him to darkness, and, as he thought, to solitude. So sudden had been the revolution of fortune which had prostrated him from the palmy height of youthful pleasure and successful love to the lowest abyss of ignominy, and the horror of a most bloody death, that he could scarcely convince himself that he was not held in the meshes of some fearful dream. His elastic and glorious frame had triumphed over a potion, the greater part of which he had fortunately not drained. He had recovered sense and consciousness, but still a dim and misty depression clung to his nerves and darkened his mind. His natural courage, and the Greek nobility of pride, enabled him to vanquish all unbecoming apprehension, and, in the judgment-court, to face his awful lot with a steady mien and unquailing eye. But the consciousness of innocence scarcely sufficed to support him when the gaze of men no longer excited his haughty valor, and he was left to loneliness and silence. He felt the damps of the dungeon sink chillingly into his enfeebled frame. *He*—the fastidious, the luxurious, the refined—he who had hitherto braved no hardship and known no sorrow! Beautiful bird that he was! why had he left his far and sunny clime—the olive groves of his native hills—the music of immemorial streams? Why had he wantoned on his glittering plumage amidst these harsh and ungenial strangers, dazzling the eye with his gorgeous hues, charming the ear with his blithesome song—thus suddenly to be arrested—caged in darkness—a victim and a prey—his gay flights for ever over—his hymns of gladness for ever stilled!

The poor Athenian! his very faults the exuberance of a gentle and joyous nature, how little had his past career fitted him for the trials he was destined to undergo! The hoots of the mob, amidst whose plaudits he had so often guided his graceful car and bounding steeds, still rang gratingly in his ear. The cold and stony faces of his former friends (the co-mates of his merry revels) still rose before his eye. None now were by to soothe, to sustain, the admired, the adulated stranger. These walls opened but on the dread arena of a violent and shameful death. And Ione! of her, too, he had heard nought; no encouraging word, no pitying message; she, too, had forsaken him; she believed him guilty—and of what crime?—the murder of a brother! He ground his teeth—he groaned aloud—and ever a sharp

fear shot across him. In that fell and fierce delirium which had so unaccountably seized his soul, which had so ravaged the disordered brain, *might he not*, indeed, unknowing to himself, have committed the crime of which he was accused? Yet, as the thought flashed upon him, it was as suddenly checked; for, amidst all the darkness of the past, he thought distinctly to recall the dim grove of Cybele, the upward face of the pale dead, the pause that he had made beside the corpse, and the sudden shock that felled him to the earth. He felt convinced of his innocence; and yet who, to the latest time, long after his mangled remains were mingled with the elements, would believe him guiltless, or uphold his fame? As he recalled his interview with Arbaces, and the causes of revenge which had been excited in the heart of that dark and fearful man, he could not but believe that he was the victim of some deep-laid and mysterious snare—the clue and train of which he was lost in attempting to discover: and Ione—Arbaces loved her—might his rival's success be founded upon his ruin? That thought cut him more deeply than all; and his noble heart was more stung by jealousy than appalled by fear. Again he groaned aloud.

A voice from the recess of the darkness answered that burst of anguish. "Who (it said) is my companion in this awful hour? Athenian Glaucus, is it thou?"

"So, indeed, they called me in mine hour of fortune: they may have other names for me now. And *thy* name, stranger?"

"Is Olinthus, thy co-mate in the prison as the trial."

"What! he whom they call the Atheist? Is it the injustice of men that hath taught thee to deny the providence of the gods?"

"Alas!" answered Olinthus: "thou, not I, art the true atheist, for thou deniest the sold true God—the Unknown One—to whom thy Athenian fathers erected an altar. It is in this hour that I know my God. He is with me in the dungeon; His smile penetrates the darkness; on the eve of death my heart whispers immortality, and earth recedes from me but to bring the weary soul nearer unto heaven."

"Tell me," said Glaucus, abruptly, "did I not hear thy name coupled with that of Apæcides in my trial? Dost thou believe me guilty?"

"God alone reads the heart; but my suspicion rested not upon thee."

"On whom, then?"

"Thy accuser, Arbaces."

"Ha! thou cheerest me; and wherefore?"

"Because I know the man's evil breast, and he had cause to fear him who is now dead."

With that, Olinthus proceeded to inform Glaucus of those details which the reader already knows, the conversion of Apæcides, the plan they had proposed for the detection of the impostures of the Egyptian priestcraft, and of the seductions practised by Arbaces upon the youthful weakness of the proselyte. "Therefore," concluded Olinthus, "had the deceased encountered Arbaces, reviled his treasons, and threatened detection, the place, the hour, might have favored the wrath of the Egyptian, and passion and craft alike dictated the fatal blow."

"It must have been so!" cried Glaucus, joyfully. "I am happy."

"Yet what, O unfortunate! avails to thee now the discovery? Thou are condemned and fated; and in thine innocence thou wilt perish."

"But I shall *know myself* guiltless; and in my mysterious madness I had fearful, though momentary, doubts. Yet tell me, man of a strange creed, thinkest thou that for small errors, or for ancestral faults, we are for ever abandoned and accursed by the Powers above, whatever name thou allottest to them?"

"God is just, and abandons not His creatures for their mere human frailty. God is merciful, and curses none but the wicked who repent not."

"Yet it seemeth to me as if, in the divine anger, I had been smitten by a sudden madness, a supernatural and solemn frenzy, wrought not by human means."

"There are demons on earth," answered the Nazarene, fearfully, "as well as there are God and His Son in heaven; and since thou acknowledgest not the last, the first may have had power over thee."

Glaucus did not reply, and there was a silence for some minutes. At length the Athenian said, in a changed, and soft, and

half-hesitating voice, "Christian, believest thou, among the doctrines of thy creed, that the dead live again—that they who have loved here are united hereafter—that beyond the grave our good name shines pure from the mortal mists that unjustly dim it in the gross-eyed world—and that the streams which are divided by the desert and the rock meet in the solemn Hades, and flow once more into one?"

"Believe I that, O Athenian? No, I do not believe—I *know!* and it is that beautiful and blessed assurance which supports me now. O Cyllene!" continued Olinthus, passionately, "bride of my heart! torn from me in the first month of our nuptials, shall I not see thee yet, and ere many days be past? Welcome, welcome death, that will bring me to heaven and thee!"

There was something in this sudden burst of human affection which struck a kindred chord in the soul of the Greek. He felt, for the first time, a sympathy greater than mere affliction between him and his companion. He crept nearer towards Olinthus; for the Italians, fierce in some points, were not unnecessarily cruel in others: they spared the separate cell and the superfluous chain, and allowed the victims of the arena the sad comfort of such freedom and such companionship as the prison would afford.

"Yes," continued the Christian with holy fervor, "the immortality of the soul—the resurrection—the reunion of the dead—is the great principle of our creed—the great truth a God suffered death itself to attest and proclaim. No fabled Elysium—no poetic Orcus—but a pure and radiant heritage of heaven itself, is the portion of the good."

"Tell me, then, thy doctrines, and expound to me thy hopes," said Glaucus, earnestly.

Olinthus was not slow to obey that prayer; and there—as oftentimes in the early ages of the Christian creed—it was in the darkness of the dungeon, and over the approach of death, that the dawning Gospel shed its soft and consecrating rays.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHANGE FOR GLAUCUS.

THE hours passed in lingering torture over the head of Nydia from the time in which she had been replaced in her cell.

Sosia, as if afraid he should be again outwitted, had refrained from visiting her until late in the morning of the following day, and then he but thrust in the periodical basket of food and wine, and hastily reclosed the door. That day rolled on, and Nydia felt herself pent—barred—inexorably confined, when that day was the judgment day of Glaucus, and when her release would have saved him! Yet knowing, almost impossible as seemed her escape, that the sole chance for the life of Glaucus rested on her, this young girl, frail, passionate, and acutely susceptible as she was—resolved not to give way to a despair that would disable her from seizing whatever opportunity *might* occur. She kept her senses whenever, beneath the whirl of intolerable thought, they reeled and tottered; nay, she took food and wine that she might sustain her strength—that she might be prepared!

She revolved scheme after scheme of escape, and was forced to dismiss all. Yet Sosia was her only hope, the only instrument with which she could tamper. He had been superstitious in the desire of ascertaining whether he could eventually purchase his freedom. Blessed gods! might he not be won by the bribe of freedom itself? was she not nearly rich enough to purchase it? Her slender arms were covered with bracelets, the presents of Ione; and on her neck she yet wore that very chain which, it may be remembered, had occasioned her jealous quarrel with Glaucus, and which she had afterwards promised vainly to wear for ever. She waited burningly till Sosia should again appear; but as hour after hour passed, and he came not, she grew impatient. Every nerve beat with fever; she could endure the solitude no longer—she groaned, she shrieked aloud—she beat herself against the door. Her cries echoed along the hall, and Sosia, in peevish anger, hastened to see what was the matter, and silence his prisoner if possible.

"Ho! ho! what is this?" said he, surlily. "Young slave, if thou screamest out thus, we must gag thee again. My shoulders will smart for it, if thou art heard by my master."

"Kind Sosia, chide me not—I cannot endure to be so long alone," answered Nydia; "the solitude appals me. Sit with me, I pray, a little while. Nay, fear not that I should attempt to escape; place thy seat before the door—keep thine eye on me—I will not stir from this spot."

Sosia, who was a considerable gossip himself, was moved by this address. He pitied one who had nobody to talk with—it was his case too; he pitied—and resolved to relieve *himself*. He took the hint of Nydia, placed a stool before the door, leant his back against it, and replied,—

"I am sure I do not wish to be churlish; and so far as a little innocent chat goes, I have no objection to indulge you. But, mind, no tricks—no more conjuring!"

"No, no; tell me, dear Sosia, what is the hour?"

"It is already evening—the goats are going home."

"O gods! how went the trial?"

"Both condemned!"

Nydia repressed the shriek. "Well—well, I thought it would be so. When do they suffer?"

"To-morrow, in the amphitheatre. If it were not for thee, little wretch! I should be allowed to go with the rest and see it."

Nydia leant back for some moments. Nature could endure no more—she had fainted away. But Sosia did not perceive it, for it was the dusk of eve, and he was full of his own privations. He went on lamenting the loss of so delightful a show, and accusing the injustice of Arbaces for singling him out from all his fellows to be converted into a jailer; and ere he had half finished, Nydia, with a deep sigh, recovered the sense of life.

"Thou sighest, blind one, at my loss! Well, that is some confort. So long as you acknowledge how much you cost me, I will endeavor not to grumble. It is hard to be ill-treated, and yet not pitied."

"Sosia, how much dost thou require to make up the purchase of thy freedom?"

"How much? Why, about two thousand sesterces."

"The gods be praised! not more? Seest thou these bracelets and this chain? They are well worth double that sum. I will give them thee if——"

"Tempt me not: I cannot release thee. Arbaces is a severe and awful master. Who knows but I might feed the fishes of the Sarnus? Alas! all the sesterces in the world would not buy me back into life. Better a live dog than a dead lion."

"Sosia, thy freedom! Think well! If thou wilt let me out, only for one little hour!—let me out at midnight—I will return ere to-morrow's dawn: nay, thou canst go with me."

"No," said Sosia, sturdily, "a slave once disobeyed Arbaces, and he was never more heard of."

"But the law gives a master no power over the life of a slave."

"The law is very obliging, but more polite than efficient. I know that Arbaces always gets the law on his side. Besides, if I am once dead, what law can bring me to life again?"

Nydia wrung her hands. "Is there no hope, then?" said she, convulsively.

"None of escape, till Arbaces gives the word."

"Well, then," said Nydia, quickly, "thou wilt not, at least, refuse to take a letter for me: thy master cannot kill thee for that."

"To whom?"

"The prætor."

"To a magistrate? No—not I. I should be made a witness in court, for what I know; and the way they cross-examine the slave is by the torture."

"Pardon: I meant not the prætor—it was a word that escaped me unawares; I meant quite another person—the gay Sallust."

"Oh! and what want you with him?"

"Glaucus was my master; he purchased me from a cruel lord. He alone has been kind to me. He is to die. I shall never live happily if I cannot, in his hour of trial and doom, let him know that one heart is grateful to him. Sallust is his friend; he will convey my message."

"I am sure he will do no such thing. Glaucus will have enough to think of be-

tween this and to-morrow without troubling his head about a blind girl."

"Man," said Nydia, rising, "wilt thou become free? Thou hast the offer in thy power; to-morrow it will be too late. Never was freedom more cheaply purchased. Thou canst easily and unmissed leave home: less than half an hour will suffice for thine absence. And for such a trifle wilt thou refuse liberty?"

Sosia was greatly moved. It was true that the request was remarkably silly; but what was that to him? So much the better. He could lock the door on Nydia, and, if Arbaces should learn his absence, the offence was venial, and would merit but a reprimand. Yet, should Nydia's letter contain something more than what she had said—should it speak of her imprisonment, as he shrewdly conjectured it would do—what then? It need never be known to Arbaces that *he* had carried the letter. At the worst the bribe was enormous—the risk light—the temptation irresistible. He hesitated no longer—he assented to the proposal.

"Give me the trinkets, and I will take the letter. Yet stay—thou art a slave—thou hast no right to these ornaments—they are thy master's."

"They were the gifts of Glaucus; he is my master. What chance hath he to claim them? Who else will know they are in my possession?"

"Enough—I will bring thee the papyrus."

"No, not papyrus—a tablet of wax and a stilus."

Nydia, as the reader will have seen, was born of gentle parents. They had done all to lighten her calamity, and her quick intellect seconded their exertions. Despite her blindness, she had therefore acquired in childhood, though imperfectly, the art to write with the sharp stilus upon waxen tablets, in which her exquisite sense of touch came to her aid. When the tablets were brought to her, she thus painfully traced some words in Greek, the language of her childhood, and which almost every Italian of the higher ranks was then supposed to know. She carefully wound round the epistle the protecting thread, and covered its knot with wax; and ere she placed it in the hands of Sosia, she thus addressed him:—

"Sosia, I am blind and in prison. Thou mayest think to deceive me—thou mayest pretend only to take this letter to Sallust—thou mayest not fulfil thy charge; but here I solemnly dedicate thy head to vengeance, thy soul to the infernal powers, if thou wrongest thy trust; and I call upon thee to place thy right hand of faith in mine, and repeat after me these words:—'By the ground on which we stand—by the elements which contain life and can curse life—by Orcus, the all-avenging—by the Olympian Jupiter, the all-seeing—I swear that I will honestly discharge my trust, and faithfully deliver into the hands of Sallust this letter! And if I perjure myself in this oath, may the full curses of heaven and hell be wreaked upon me!' Enough!—I trust thee—take thy reward. It is already dark—depart at once."

"Thou art a strange girl, and thou hast frightened me terribly; but it is all very natural: and if Sallust is to be found, I give him this letter as I have sworn. By my faith, I may have my little peccadilloes! but perjury—no! I leave *that* to my betters."

With this Sosia withdrew, carefully passing the heavy bolt athwart Nydia's door—carefully locking its wards; and, hanging the key to his girdle, he retired to his own den, enveloped himself from head to foot in a huge disguising cloak, and slipped out by the back way undisturbed and unseen.

The streets were thin and empty. He soon gained the house of Sallust. The porter bade him leave his letter, and be gone; for Sallust was so grieved at the condemnation of Glaucus, that he could not on any account be disturbed.

"Nevertheless, I have sworn to give this letter into his own hands—do so I must!" And Sosia, well knowing by experience that Cerberus loves a sop, thrust some half a dozen sesterces into the hand of the porter.

"Well, well," said the latter, relenting, "you may enter if you will; but, to tell you the truth, Sallust is drinking himself out of his grief. It is his way when anything disturbs him. He orders a capital supper, the best wine, and does not give over till every thing is out of his head—but the liquor."

"An excellent plan—excellent! Ah, what

it is to be rich! If I were Sallust, I would have some grief or another every day. But just say a kind word for me with the atriensis—I see him coming."

Sallust was too sad to receive company; he was too sad, also, to drink alone: so, as was his wont, he admitted his favorite freedman to his entertainment, and a stranger banquet never was held. For ever and anon the kind-hearted epicure sighed, whimpered, wept outright, and then turned with double zest to some new dish or his refilled goblet.

"My good fellow," said he to his companion, "it was a most awful judgment—heigh-ho!—it is not bad, that kid, eh? Poor, dear Glaucus!—what a jaw the lion has too! Ah, ah, ah!"

And Sallust sobbed loudly—the fit was stopped by a counteraction of hiccups.

"Take a cup of wine," said the freedman.

"A thought too cold; but then how cold Glaucus must be! Shut up the house to-morrow—not a slave shall stir forth—none of my people shall honor that cursed arena—No, no!"

"Taste the Falernian—your grief distracts you. By the gods, it does!—a piece of that cheesecake."

It was at this auspicious moment that Sosia was admitted to the presence of the disconsolate carouser.

"Ho!—what art thou?"

"Merely a messenger to Sallust. I give him this billet from a young female. There is no answer that I know of. May I withdraw?"

Thus said the discreet Sosia, keeping his face muffled in his cloak, and speaking with a feigned voice, so that he might not hereafter be recognized.

"By the gods—a pimp! Unfeeling wretch!—do you not see my sorrows? Go!—and the curses of Pandarus with you!"

Sosia lost not a moment in retiring.

"Will you read the letter, Sallust?" said the freedman.

"Letter!—*which* letter?" said the epicure, reeling, for he began to see double. "A curse on these wenches, say I! Am I a man to think of—(*hiccup*)—pleasure, when—when—my friend is going to be eat up?"

"Eat another tartlet."

"No, no! My grief chokes me!"

"Take him to bed," said the freedman; and, Sallust's head now declining fairly on his breast, they bore him off to his cubiculum, still muttering lamentations for Glaucus, and imprecations on the unfeeling overtures of ladies of pleasure. Meanwhile Sosia strode indignantly homeward. "Pimp, indeed!" quoth he to himself. "Pimp! a scurvy-tongued fellow that Sallust! Had I been called knave, or thief, I could have forgiven it; but pimp! Faugh! there is something in the word which the toughest stomach in the world would rise against. A knave is a knave for his own pleasure, and a thief a thief for his own profit; and there is something honorable and philosophical in being a rascal for one's own sake: that is doing things upon principle—upon a grand scale. But a pimp is a thing that defiles itself for another! a pipkin, that is put on the fire for another man's pottage! a napkin, that every guest wipes his hands upon! and the scullion says, 'by your leave' too! A pimp! I would rather he had called me parricide! But the man was drunk, and did not know what he said; and, besides, I disguised myself. Had he seen it had been Sosia who addressed him, it would have been 'honest Sosia!' and, 'worthy man!' I warrant. Nevertheless, the trinkets have been won easily—that's some comfort! and, O goddess Feronia! I shall be a freedman soon! and then I should like to see who'll call me pimp!—unless, indeed, he pay me pretty handsomely for it!"

While Sosia was soliloquizing in this high-minded and generous vein, his path lay along a narrow lane that led towards the amphitheatre and its adjacent palaces. Suddenly, as he turned a sharp corner, he found himself in the midst of a considerable crowd. Men, women, and children, all were hurrying on, laughing, talking, gesticulating; and, ere he was aware of it, the worthy Sosia was borne away with the noisy stream.

"What now?" he asked of his nearest neighbor, a young artificer; "what now? Where are all these good folks thronging? Does any rich patron give away alms or viands to-night?"

"Not so, man—better still," replied the artificer; "the noble Pansa—the people's friend—has granted the public leave to see

the beasts in their *vivaria*. By Hercules! they will not be seen so safely by some persons to-morrow!"

"'Tis a pretty sight," said the slave, yielding to the throng that impelled him onward; "and since I may not go to the sports to-morrow, I may as well take a peep at the beasts to-night."

"You will do well," returned his new acquaintance; "a lion and a tiger are not to be seen at Pompeii every day."

The crowd had now entered a broken and wide space of ground, on which, as it was only lighted scantily and from a distance, the press became dangerous to those whose limbs and shoulders were not fitted for a mob. Nevertheless, the women especially—many of them with children in their arms, or even at the breast—were the most resolute in forcing their way; and their shrill exclamations of complaint or objurgation were heard loud above the more jovial and masculine voices. Yet, amidst them was a young and girlish voice, that appeared to come from one too happy in her excitement to be alive to the inconvenience of the crowd.

"Aha!" cried the young woman, to some of her companions, "I always told you so; I always said we should have a man for the lion; and now we have one for the tiger too! I wish to-morrow were come!

"Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row;
Lo! the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmæna,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hush'd arena.
Talk while you may, you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death!
Tramp! tramp! how gaily they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!"

"A jolly girl!" said Sosia.

"Yes," replied the young artificer, a curly-headed, handsome youth. "Yes," replied he, enviously; "the women love a gladiator. If I had been a slave, I would have soon found my schoolmaster in the lanista!"

"Would you, indeed?" said Sosia, with a sneer. "People's notions differ!"

The crowd had now arrived at the place of destination; but as the cell in which the wild beasts were confined was extremely small and narrow, tenfold more vehement than it hitherto had been was the rush of the aspirants to obtain admittance. Two of the officers of the amphitheatre, placed at the entrance, very wisely mitigated the evil by dispensing to the foremost only a limited number of tickets at a time, and admitting no new visitors till their predecessors had sated their curiosity. Sosia, who was a tolerably stout fellow, and not troubled with any remarkable scruples of diffidence or good-breeding, contrived to be among the first of the initiated.

Separated from his companion, the artificer, Sosia found himself in a narrow cell of oppressive heat and atmosphere, and lighted by several rank and flaring torches.

The animals, usually kept in different vivaria, or dens, were now, for the greater entertainment of the visitors, placed in one, but equally indeed divided from each other by strong cages protected by iron bars.

There they were, the fell and grim wanderers of the desert, who have now become almost the principal agents of this story. The lion, who, as being the more gentle by nature than his fellow-beast, had been more incited to ferocity by hunger, stalked restlessly and fiercely to and fro his narrow confines: his eyes were lurid with rage and famine; and as, every now and then, he paused and glared around, the spectators fearfully pressed backward, and drew their breath more quickly. But the tiger lay quiet and extended at full length in his cage, and only by an occasional play of his tail, or a long impatient yawn, testified any emotion at his confinement, or at the crowd which honored him with their presence.

"I have seen no fiercer beast than yon lion even in the amphitheatre of Rome," said a gigantic and sinewy fellow who stood at the right hand of Sosia.

"I feel humbled when I look at his limbs," replied, at the left of Sosia, a slighter and younger figure, with his arms folded on his breast.

The slave looked first at one and then at the other. "*Virtus in medio!*—Virtue is ever in the middle!" muttered he to himself; "a goodly neighborhood for thee, Sosia—a gladiator on each side!"

"That is well said, Lydon," returned the huger gladiator; "I feel the same."

"And to think," observed Lydon, in a tone of deep feeling, "to think that the noble

Greek, he whom we saw but a day or two since before us, so full of youth, and health, and joyousness, is to feast yon monster!"

"Why not?" growled Niger, savagely; "many an honest gladiator has been compelled to a like combat by the emperor—why not a wealthy murderer by the law?"

Lydon sighed, shrugged his shoulders, and remained silent. Meanwhile the common gazers listened with staring eyes and lips apart: the gladiators were objects of interest as well as the beasts—they were animals of the same species; so the crowd glanced from one to the other—the men and the brutes—whispering their comments and anticipating the morrow.

"Well!" said Lydon, turning away, "I thank the gods that it is not the lion or the tiger *I* am to contend with; even you, Niger, are a gentler combatant than they."

"But equally dangerous," said the gladiator, with a fierce laugh; and the bystanders, admiring his vast limbs and ferocious countenance, laughed too.

"That as it may be," answered Lydon, carelessly, as he pressed through the throng and quitted the den.

"I may as well take advantage of his shoulders," thought the prudent Sosia, hastening to follow him; "the crowd always give way to a gladiator, so I will keep close behind, and come in for a share of his consequence."

The son of Medon strode quickly through the mob, many of whom recognized his features and profession.

"That is young Lydon, a brave fellow; he fights to-morrow," said one.

"Ah! I have a bet on him," said another; "see how firmly he walks!"

"Good luck to thee, Lydon!" said a third.

"Lydon, you have my wishes," half-whispered a fourth, smiling—(a comely woman of the middle class)—"and if you win, why, you may hear more of me."

"A handsome man, by Venus!" cried a fifth, who was a girl scarce in her teens. "Thank you," returned Sosia, gravely taking the compliment to himself.

However strong the purer motives of Lydon, and certain though it be that he would never have entered so bloody a calling but from the hope of obtaining his father's freedom, he was not altogether unmoved by the notice he excited. He forgot that the voices now raised in commendation might, on the morrow, shout over his death-pangs. By nature fierce and reckless, as well as generous and warm-hearted, he was already imbued with the pride of a profession that he fancied he disdained, and affected by the influence of a companionship that in reality he loathed. He saw himself now a man of importance; his step grew yet lighter, and his mien more elate.

"Niger," said he, turning suddenly, as he had now threaded the crowd, "we have often quarrelled; we are not matched against each other, but one of us, at least, may reasonably expect to fall—give us thy hand!"

"Most readily," said Sosia, extending his palm.

"Ha! what fool is this? Why, I thought Niger was at my heels!"

"I forgive the mistake," replied Sosia, condescendingly: "don't mention it; the error was easy—I and Niger are somewhat of the same build."

"Ha! ha! that is excellent! Niger would have slit thy throat had he heard thee!"

"You gentlemen of the arena have a most disagreeable mode of talking," said Sosia; "let us change the conversation."

"*Vah! vah!*" said Lydon, impatiently; "I am in no humor to converse with thee!"

"Why, truly," returned the slave, "you must have serious thoughts enough to occupy your mind: to-morrow is, I think, your first essay in the arena. Well, I am sure you will die bravely!"

"May thy words fall on thine own head!" said Lydon, superstitiously, for he by no means liked the blessing of Sosia. "*Die!* No—I trust *my* hour is not yet come."

"He who plays at dice with death must expect the dog's throw," replied Sosia, maliciously. "But you are a strong fellow, and I wish you all imaginable luck; and so, *vale!*"

With that the slave turned on his heel, and took his way homeward.

"I trust the rogue's words are not ominous," said Lydon, musingly. "In my zeal for my father's liberty, and my confidence

in my own thews and sinews, I have not contemplated the possibility of death. My poor father! I am thy only son!—if I were to fall——"

As the thought crossed him, the gladiator strode on with a more rapid and restless pace, when suddenly, in an opposite street, he beheld the very object of his thoughts. Leaning on his stick, his form bent by care and age, his eyes downcast, and his steps trembling, the gray-haired Medon slowly approached towards the gladiator. Lydon paused a moment; he divined at once the cause that brought forth the old man at that late hour.

"Be sure, it is I whom he seeks," thought he; "he is horror-struck at the condemnation of Olinthus—he more than ever esteems the arena criminal and hateful—he comes again to dissuade me from the contest. I must shun him—I cannot brook his prayers—his tears!"

These thoughts, so long to recite, flashed across the young man like lightning. He turned abruptly and fled swiftly in an opposite direction. He paused not till, almost spent and breathless, he found himself on the summit of a small acclivity which overlooked the most gay and splendid part of that miniature city; and as he there paused, and gazed along the tranquil streets glittering in the rays of the moon (which had just arisen, and brought partially and picturesquely into light the crowd around the amphitheatre at a distance, murmuring, and swaying to and fro), the influence of the scene affected him, rude and unimaginative though his nature. He sat himself down to rest upon the steps of a deserted portico, and felt the calm of the hour quiet and restore him. Opposite and near at hand, the lights gleamed from a palace, in which the master now held his revels. The doors were open for coolness, and the gladiator beheld the numerous and festive group gathered round the tables in the atrium;* while behind them, closing the long vista of the illumined rooms beyond, the spray of the distant fountain sparkled in the moonbeams. There, the garlands wreathed round the columns of the hall—there, gleamed still and frequent the marble statue—there, amidst peals of jocund laughter, rose the music and the lay.

EPICUREAN SONG.

"Away with your stories of Hades,
Which the Flamen has forged to affright us!—
We laugh at your three Maiden Ladies,
Your Fates,—and your sullen Cocytus.

Poor Jove has a troublesome life, sir,
Could we credit your tales of his portals—
In shutting his ears on his wife, sir,
And opening his eyes upon mortals.

Oh, blest be the bright Epicurus!
Who taught us to laugh at such fables;
On Hades they wanted to moor us,
And his hand cut the terrible cables.

If, then, there's a Jove or a Juno,
They vex not their heads about us, man;
Besides, if they did, I and you know
'Tis the life of a god to live *thus*, man!

What! think you the gods place their bliss—eh?—
In playing the spy on a sinner?
In counting the girls that we kiss—eh?
Or the cups that we empty at dinner?

Content with the soft lips that love us,
This music, this wine, and this mirth, boys,
We care not for gods up above us,—
We know there's no god for this earth, boys!"

While Lydon's piety (which, accommodating as it might be, was in no slight degree disturbed by these verses, which embodied the fashionable philosophy of the day) slowly recovered itself from the shock it had received, a small party of men, in plain garments and of the middle class, passed by his resting-place. They were in earnest conversation, and did not seem to notice or heed the gladiator as they moved on.

"O horror on horrors!" said one; "Olinthus is snatched from us! our right arm is lopped away! When will Christ descend to protect his own?"

"Can human atrocity go farther?" said another: "to sentence an innocent man to the same arena as a murderer! But let us not despair; the thunder of Sinai may yet be heard, and the Lord preserve his saint. 'The fool has said in his heart, There is no God.'"

At that moment out broke again, from the illumined palace, the burden of the revellers' song:—

* In the atrium, as I have elsewhere observed, a larger party of guests than ordinary was frequently entertained.

"We care not for gods up above us,—
We know there's no god for this earth, boys!" *

Ere the words died away, the Nazarenes, moved by sudden indignation, caught up the echo, and, in the words of one of their favorite hymns, shouted aloud—

THE WARNING HYMN OF THE NAZARENES.

"Around—about—for ever near thee,
God—OUR GOD—shall mark and hear thee!
On His car of storm He sweeps!
Bow, ye heavens, and shrink, ye deeps!
Woe to the proud ones who defy Him!—
Woe to the dreamers who deny Him!
Woe to the wicked, woe!
The proud stars shall fail—
The sun shall grow pale—
The heavens shrivel up like a scroll—
Hell's ocean shall bare
Its depths of despair,
Each wave an eternal soul!
For the only thing, then,
That shall *not* live again
Is the corpse of the giant TIME!
Hark, the trumpet of thunder!
Lo, earth rent asunder!
And, forth, on his Angel-throne,
HE comes through the gloom,
The Judge of the Tomb,
To summon and save His own!
Oh joy to Care, and woe to Crime,
He comes to save His own!
Woe to the proud ones who defy Him!
Woe to the dreamers who deny Him!
Woe to the wicked, woe!"

A sudden silence from the startled hall of revel succeeded these ominous words: the Christians swept on, and were soon hidden from the sight of the gladiator. Awed, he scarce knew why, by the mystic denunciations of the Christians, Lydon, after a short pause, now rose to pursue his way homeward.

Before him, how serenely slept the starlight on that lovely city! how breathlessly its pillared streets reposed in their security! —how softly rippled the dark-green waves beyond!—how cloudless spread, aloft and blue, the dreaming Campanian skies! Yet this was the last night for the gay Pompeii! the colony of the hoar Chaldean! the fabled city of Hercules! the delight of the voluptuous Roman! Age after age had rolled, indestructive, unheeded, over its head; and now the last ray quivered on the dial-plate of its doom. The gladiator heard some light steps behind—a group of females were wending homeward from their visit to the amphitheatre. As he turned, his eye was arrested by a strange and sudden apparition. From the summit of Vesuvius, darkly visible at the distance, there shot a pale, meteoric, livid light—it trembled an instant and was gone. And at the same moment that his eye caught it, the voice of one of the youngest of the women broke out hilariously and shrill:

"TRAMP, TRAMP! HOW GAILY THEY GO!
HO, HO! FOR THE MORROW'S MERRY SHOW!"

* See note (*a*) at the end.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

"Stat ecce ad aras hostia, expectat manum
Cervice pronâ."—SENEC.

Before the altars, lo, the victim stands,
And waits with bended neck the fatal blow.

"Mutatus ordo est—sede nil propriâ jacet,
Sed acta retro cuncta."—*Ibid.*

The appointed order changes! nought remains
In the allotted ranks, but backward rolls
The tide of acted things.

"Tempore quanquam illo tellus quoque, et æquora ponti
Signa dabant."—VIRGIL: *Georgic.* lib. i.

In the same time, the earth and surging seas
Gave signal!

CHAPTER I.

THE DREAM OF ARBACES.—A VISITOR AND A WARNING TO THE EGYPTIAN.

THE awful night preceding the fierce joy of the amphitheatre rolled drearily away, and grayly broke forth the dawn of THE LAST DAY OF POMPEII! The air was uncommonly calm and sultry—a thin and dull mist gathered over the valleys and hollows of the broad Campanian fields. But yet it was remarked in surprise by the early fishermen, that, despite the exceeding stillness of the atmosphere, the waves of the sea were agitated, and seemed, as it were, to run disturbedly back from the shore; while along the blue and stately Sarnus, whose ancient breadth of channel the traveller now vainly seeks to discover, there crept a hoarse and sullen murmur, as it glided by the laughing plains and the gaudy villas of the wealthy citizens. Clear above the low mist rose the time-worn towers of the immemorial town, the red-tiled roofs of the bright streets, the solemn columns of many temples, and the statue-crowned portals of the Forum and the Arch of Triumph. Far in the distance, the outline of the circling hills soared above the vapors, and mingled with the changeful hues of the morning sky. The cloud that had so long rested over the crest of Vesuvius had suddenly vanished, and its rugged and haughty brow looked without a frown over the beautiful scenes below.

Despite the earliness of the hour, the gates of the city were already opened. Horseman upon horseman, vehicle after vehicle, poured rapidly in; and the voices of numerous pedestrian groups, clad in holyday attire, rose high in joyous and excited merriment; the streets were crowded with citizens and strangers from the populous neighborhood of Pompeii; and noisily—fast—confusedly swept the many streams of life towards the fatal show.

Despite the vast size of the amphitheatre, seemingly so disproportioned to the extent of the city, and formed to include nearly the whole population of Pompeii itself, so great, on extraordinary occasions, was the concourse of strangers from all parts of Campania, that the space before it was usually crowded, for several hours previous to the commencement of the sports, by such persons as were not entitled by their rank to appointed and special seats. And the intense curiosity which the trial and sentence of two criminals so remarkable had occasioned, increased the crowd on this day to an extent wholly unprecedented.

While the common people, with the lively

vehemence of their Campanian blood, were thus pushing, scrambling, hurrying on,—yet, amidst all their eagerness, preserving, as is now the wont with Italians in such meetings, a wonderful order and unquarrelsome good-humor,—a strange visitor to Arbaces was threading her way to his sequestered mansion. At the sight of her quaint and primæval garb—of her wild gait and gestures—the passengers she encountered touched each other and smiled; but as they caught a glimpse of her countenance, the mirth was hushed at once, for the face was as the face of the dead; and, what with the ghastly features and obsolete robes of the stranger, it seemed as if one long entombed had risen once more amongst the living. In silence and awe each group gave way as she passed along, and she soon gained the broad porch of the Egyptian's palace.

The black porter, like the rest of the world, astir at an unusual hour, started as he opened the door to her summons.

The sleep of the Egyptian had been unusually profound during the night; but, as the dawn approached, it was disturbed by strange and unquiet dreams which impressed him the more as they were colored by the peculiar philosophy he embraced.

He thought that he was transported to the bowels of the earth, and that he stood alone in a mighty cavern, supported by enormous columns of rough and primæval rock, lost, as they ascended, in the vastness of a shadow athwart whose eternal darkness no beam of day had ever glanced. And in the space between these columns were huge wheels, that whirled round and round unceasingly, and with a rushing and roaring noise. Only to the right and left extremities of the cavern, the space between the pillars was left bare, and the apertures stretched away into galleries—not wholly dark, but dimly lighted by wandering and erratic fires, that, meteor-like, now crept (as the snake creeps) along the rugged and dank soil; and now leaped fiercely to and fro, darting across the vast gloom in wild gambols—suddenly disappearing, and as suddenly bursting into tenfold brilliancy and power. And while he gazed wonderingly upon the gallery to the left, thin, mist-like, aerial shapes passed slowly up; and when they had gained the hall they seemed to rise aloft, and to vanish, as the smoke vanishes, in the measureless ascent.

He turned in fear towards the opposite extremity—and behold! there came swiftly, from the gloom above, similar shadows, which swept hurriedly along the gallery to the right, as if borne involuntarily adown the tides of some invisible stream; and the faces of these spectres were more distinct than those that emerged from the opposite passage; and on some was joy, and on others sorrow—some were vivid with expectation and hope, some unutterably dejected by awe and horror. And so they passed swift and constantly on, till the eyes of the gazer grew dizzy and blinded with the whirl of an ever-varying succession of things impelled by a power apparently not their own.

Arbaces turned away; and, in the recess of the hall, he saw the mighty form of a giantess seated upon a pile of skulls, and her hands were busy upon a pale and shadowy woof; and he saw that the woof communicated with the numberless wheels, as if it guided the machinery of their movements. He thought his feet, by some secret agency, were impelled towards the female, and that he was borne onwards till he stood before her, face to face. The countenance of the giantess was solemn and hushed, and beautifully serene. It was as the face of some colossal sculpture of his own ancestral sphynx. No passion—no human emotion, disturbed its brooding and unwrinkled brow; there, was neither sadness, nor joy, nor memory, nor hope; it was free from all with which the wild human heart can sympathize. The mystery of mysteries rested on its beauty,—it awed, but terrified not; it was the Incarnation of the Sublime. And Arbaces felt the voice leave his lips, without an impulse of his own; and the voice asked,—

"Who art thou, and what is thy task?"

"I am That which thou hast acknowledged," answered, without desisting from its work, the mighty phantom. "My name is NATURE! These are the wheels of the world, and my hand guides them for the life of all things."

"And what," said the voice of Arbaces, "are these galleries, that, strangely and fitfully illumined, stretch on either hand into the abyss of gloom?"

"That," answered the giant-mother, "which thou beholdest to the left, is the gallery of the Unborn. The shadows that flit onward and upward into the world, are the souls that pass from the long eternity of being to their destined pilgrimage on earth. That which thou beholdest to thy right, wherein the shadows descending from above sweep on, equally unknown and dim, is the gallery of the Dead!"

"And wherefore," said the voice of Arbaces, "yon wandering lights, that so wildly break the darkness; but only *break*, not *reveal?*"

"Dark fool of the human sciences! dreamer of the stars, and would-be decipherer of the heart and origin of things! those lights are but the glimmerings of such knowledge as is vouchsafed to Nature to work her way, to trace enough of the past and future to give providence to her designs. Judge, then, puppet as thou art, what lights are reserved for thee!"

Arbaces felt himself tremble as he asked again, "Wherefore am I here?"

"It is the forecast of thy soul—the prescience of thy rushing doom—the shadow of thy fate lengthening into eternity as it declines from earth."

Ere he could answer, Arbaces felt a rushing WIND sweep down the cavern, as the wings of a giant god. Borne aloft from the ground, and whirled on high as a leaf in the storms of autumn, he beheld himself in the midst of the Spectres of the Dead, and hurrying with them along the length of gloom. As in vain and impotent despair he struggled against the impelling power, he thought the WIND grew into something like a shape—a spectral outline of the wings and talons of an eagle, with limbs floating far and indistinctly along the air, and eyes that, alone clearly and vividly seen, glared stonily and remorselessly on his own.

"What art thou?" again said the voice of the Egyptian.

"I am That which thou hast acknowledged;" and the spectre laughed aloud—"and my name is NECESSITY."

"To what dost thou bear me?"

"To the Unknown."

"To happiness or to woe?"

"As thou hast sown, so shalt thou reap."

"Dread thing, not so! If thou art the Ruler of life, *thine* are my misdeeds, not mine."

"I am but the breath of God!" answered the mighty WIND.

"Then is my wisdom vain!" groaned the dreamer.

"The husbandman accuses not fate, when, having sown thistles, he reaps not corn. Thou hast sown crime, accuse not fate if thou reapest not the harvest of virtue."

The scene suddenly changed. Arbaces was in a place of human bones; and lo! in the midst of them was a skull, and the skull, still retaining its fleshless hollows, assumed slowly, and in the mysterious confusion of a dream, the face of Apæcides; and forth from the grinning jaws there crept a small worm, and it crawled to the feet of Arbaces. He attempted to stamp on it and crush it; but it became longer and larger with that attempt. It swelled and bloated till it grew into a vast serpent: it coiled itself round the limbs of Arbaces; it crunched his bones; it raised its glaring eyes and poisonous jaws to his face. He writhed in vain; he withered—he gasped—beneath the influence of the blighting breath—he felt himself blasted into death. And then a voice came from the reptile which still bore the face of Apæcides, and rang in his reeling ear,—

"THY VICTIM IS THY JUDGE! THE WORM THOU WOULDST CRUSH BECOMES THE SERPENT THAT DEVOURS THEE!"

With a shriek of wrath, and woe, and despairing resistance, Arbaces awoke—his hair on end—his brow bathed in dew—his eyes glazed and staring—his mighty frame quivering as an infant's, beneath the agony of that dream. He awoke—he collected himself—he blessed the gods whom he disbelieved, that he *was* in a dream!—he turned his eyes from side to side—he saw the dawning light break through his small but lofty window—he was in the Precincts of Day—he rejoiced—he smiled;—his eyes fell, and opposite to him he beheld the ghastly features, the lifeless eye, the livid lip—of the Hag of Vesuvius!

"Ha!" he cried, placing his hands before his eyes, as to shut out the grisly vision, "do I dream still?—Am I with the dead?"

"Mighty Hermes—no! Thou art with

one deathlike, but not dead. Recognize thy friend and slave."

There was a long silence. Slowly the shudders that passed over the limbs of the Egyptian chased each other away, faintlier and faintlier dying till he was himself again.

"It was a dream, then!" said he. "Well—let me dream no more, or the day cannot compensate for the pangs of night. Woman, how camest thou here, and wherefore?"

"I came to warn thee," answered the sepulchral voice of the Saga.

"Warn me! the dream lied not, then? Of what peril?"

"Listen to me. Some evil hangs over this fated city. Fly while it be time. Thou knowest that I hold my home on that mountain beneath which old tradition saith there yet burn the fires of the river of Phlegethon; and in my cavern is a vast abyss, and in that abyss I have of late marked a red and dull stream creep slowly, slowly on; and heard many and mighty sounds hissing and roaring through the gloom. But last night, as I looked thereon, behold the stream was no longer dull, but intensely and fiercely luminous; and while I gazed, the beast that liveth with me, and was cowering by my side, uttered a shrill howl, and fell down and died,* and the slaver and froth were round his lips. I crept back to my lair; but I distinctly heard, all the night, the rock shake and tremble; and, though the air was heavy and still, there were the hissing of pent winds, and the grinding as of wheels, beneath the ground.

"So, when I rose this morning at the very birth of dawn, I looked again down the abyss, and I saw vast fragments of stone borne black and floatingly over the lurid stream; and the stream itself was broader, fiercer, redder than the night before. Then I went forth, and ascended to the summit of the rock; and in that summit there appeared a sudden and vast hollow, which I had never perceived before, from which curled a dim, faint smoke; and the vapor was deathly, and I gasped, and sickened, and nearly died. I returned home. I took my gold and my drugs, and left the habitation of many years; for I remembered the dark Etruscan prophecy which saith, 'When the mountain opens, the city shall fall—when the smoke crowns the Hill of the Parched Fields, there shall be woe and weeping in the hearths of the Children of the Sea.' Dread master, ere I leave these walls for some more distant dwelling, I come to thee. As thou livest, know I in my heart that the earthquake, that sixteen years ago shook this city to its solid base, was but the forerunner of more deadly doom. The walls of Pompeii are built above the fields of the Dead, and the rivers of the sleepless Hell. Be warned and fly!"

"Witch, I thank thee for thy care of one not ungrateful. On yon table stands a cup of gold; take it, it is thine. I dreamt not that there lived one, out of the priesthood of Isis, who would have saved Arbaces from destruction. The signs thou hast seen in the bed of the extinct volcano," continued the Egyptian, musingly, "surely tell of some coming danger to the city; perhaps another earthquake fiercer than the last. Be that as it may, there is a new reason for my hastening from these walls. After this day I will prepare my departure. Daughter of Etruria, whither wendest thou?"

"I shall cross over to Herculaneum this day, and, wandering, thence, along the coast, shall seek out a new home. I am friendless; my two companions, the fox and the snake, are dead. Great Hermes, thou hast promised me twenty additional years of life!"

"Ay," said the Egyptian, "I have promised thee. But, woman," he added, lifting himself upon his arm, and gazing curiously on her face, "tell me, I pray thee, wherefore thou wishest to live? What sweets dost thou discover in existence?"

"It is not life that is sweet, but death that is awful," replied the hag, in a sharp, impressive tone, that struck forcibly upon the heart of the vain star-seer. He winced at the truth of the reply; and, no longer anxious to retain so uninviting a companion, he said, "Time wanes; I must prepare for the solemn spectacle of this day. Sister, farewell! enjoy thyself as thou canst over the ashes of life."

The hag, who had placed the costly gift of Arbaces in the loose folds of her vest, now rose to depart. When she had gained the

* We may suppose that the exhalations were similar in effect to those of the *Grotta del Cane.*

door she paused, turned back, and said, "This may be the last time we meet on earth; but whither flieth the flame when it leaves the ashes?—Wandering to and fro, up and down, as an exhalation on the morass, the flame may be seen in the marshes of the lake below; and the witch and the magian, the pupil and the master, the great one and the accursed one, may meet again. Farewell!"

"Out, croaker!" murmured Arbaces, as the door closed on the hag's tattered robes; and, impatient of his own thoughts, not yet recovered from the past dream, he hastily summoned his slaves.

It was the custom to attend the ceremonials of the amphitheatre in festive robes, and Arbaces arrayed himself that day with more than usual care. His tunic was of the most dazzling white; his many fibulæ were formed from the most precious stones; over his tunic flowed a loose eastern robe, half-gown, half-mantle, glowing in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye; and the sandals, that reached half way up the knee, were studded with gems, and inlaid with gold. In the quackeries that belonged to his priestly genius, Arbaces never neglected, on great occasions, the arts which dazzle and impose upon the vulgar; and on this day, that was for ever to release him, by the sacrifice of Glaucus, from the fear of a rival and the chance of detection, he felt that he was arraying himself as for a triumph or a nuptial feast.

It was customary for men of rank to be accompanied to the shows of the amphitheatre by a procession of their slaves and freedmen; and the long "family" of Arbaces were already arranged in order, to attend the litter of their lord.

Only, to their great chagrin, the slaves in attendance on Ione, and the worthy Sosia, as jailer to Nydia, were condemned to remain at home.

"Callias," said Arbaces, apart, to his freedman, who was buckling on his girdle, "I am weary of Pompeii; I propose to quit it in three days, should the wind favor. Thou knowest the vessel that lies in the harbor which belonged to Narses, of Alexandria; I have purchased it of him. The day after to-morrow we shall begin to remove my stores."

"So soon! 'Tis well. Arbaces shall be obeyed;—and his ward, Ione?"

"Accompanies me. Enough!—Is the morning fair?"

"Dim and oppressive; it will probably be intensely hot in the forenoon."

"The poor gladiators, and more wretched criminals! Descend, and see that the slaves are marshalled."

Left alone, Arbaces stepped into his chamber of study, and thence upon the portico without. He saw the dense masses of men pouring fast into the amphitheatre, and heard the cry of the assistants, and the cracking of the cordage, as they were straining aloft the huge awning under which the citizens, molested by no discomforting ray, were to behold, at luxurious ease, the agonies of their fellow-creatures. Suddenly a wild, strange sound went forth, and as suddenly died away—it was the roar of the lion. There was a silence in the distant crowd; but the silence was followed by joyous laughter—they were making merry at the hungry impatience of the royal beast.

"Brutes!" muttered the disdainful Arbaces, "are ye less homicides than I am? *I* slay but in self-defence—ye make murder pastime."

He turned, with a restless and curious eye, towards Vesuvius. Beautifully glowed the green vineyards round its breast, and tranquil as eternity lay in the breathless skies the form of the mighty hill.

"We have time yet, if the earthquake be nursing," thought Arbaces; and he turned from the spot. He passed by the table which bore his mystic scrolls and Chaldean calculations.

"August art!" he thought, "I have not consulted thy decrees since I passed the danger and the crisis they foretold. What matter?—I know that *henceforth* all in my path is bright and smooth. Have not events already proved it? Away, doubt—away, pity! Reflect, O my heart,—reflect, for the future, but two images—Empire and Ione!"

CHAPTER II.

THE AMPHITHEATRE.

NYDIA, assured by the account of Sosia, on his return home, and satisfied that her letter was in the hands of Sallust, gave herself up once more to hope. Sallust would surely lose no time in seeking the prætor—in coming to the house of the Egyptian—in releasing her—in breaking the prison of Calenus. That very night Glaucus would be free. Alas! the night passed—the dawn broke; she heard nothing but the hurried footsteps of the slaves along the hall and peristyle, and their voices in preparation for the show. By and by, the commanding voice of Arbaces broke on her ear—a flourish of music rung out cheerily: the long procession were sweeping to the amphitheatre to glut their eyes on the death-pangs of the Athenian!

The procession of Arbaces moved along slowly, and with much solemnity, till now, arriving at the place where it was necessary for such as came in litters or chariots to alight, Arbaces descended from his vehicle, and proceeded to the entrance by which the more distinguished spectators were admitted. His slaves, mingling with the humbler crowd, were stationed by officers who received their tickets (not much unlike our modern Opera ones), in places in the *popularia* (the seats apportioned to the vulgar). And now, from the spot where Arbaces sat, his eye scanned the mighty and impatient crowd that filled the stupendous theatre.

On the upper tier (but apart from the male spectators) sat the women, their gay dresses resembling some gaudy flower-bed; it is needless to add that they were the most talkative part of the assembly; and many were the looks directed up to them, especially from the benches appropriated to the young and the unmarried men. On the lower seats round the arena sat the more high-born and wealthy visitors—the magistrates and those of senatorial or equestrian * dignity: the passages which, by corridors at the right and left, gave access to these seats, at either end of the oval arena, were also the entrances for the combatants. Strong palings at these passages prevented any unwelcome eccentricity in the movements of the beasts, and confined them to their appointed prey. Around the parapet which was raised above the arena, and from which the seats gradually rose, were gladiatorial inscriptions, and paintings wrought in fresco, typical of the entertainments for which the place was designed. Throughout the whole building wound invisible pipes, from which, as the day advanced, cooling and fragrant showers were to be sprinkled over the spectators. The officers of the amphitheatre were still employed in the task of fixing the vast awning (or *velaria*) which covered the whole, and which luxurious invention the Campanians arrogated to themselves: it was woven of the whitest Apulian wool, and variegated with broad stripes of crimson. Owing either to some inexperience on the part of the workmen, or to some defect in the machinery, the awning, however, was not arranged that day so happily as usual; indeed from the immense space of the circumference, the task was always one of great difficulty and art—so much so, that it could seldom be adventured in rough or windy weather. But the present day was so remarkably still that there seemed to the spectators no excuse for the awkwardness of the artificers; and when a large gap in the back of the awning was still visible, from the obstinate refusal of one part of the velaria to ally itself with the rest, the murmurs of discontent were loud and general.

The ædile Pansa, at whose expense the exhibition was given, looked particularly annoyed at the defect, and vowed bitter vengeance on the head of the chief officer of the show, who, fretting, puffing, perspiring, busied himself in idle orders and unavailing threats.

The hubbub ceased suddenly—the operators desisted—the crowd were stilled—the gap was forgotten—for now, with a loud and warlike flourish of trumpets, the gladiators, marshalled in ceremonious procession, entered the arena. They swept round the oval space very slowly and deliberately, in order to give the spectators full leisure to admire their stern serenity of feature—their brawny limbs and various arms, as well as to form

* The equites sat immediately behind the senators.

such wagers as the excitement of the moment might suggest.

"Oh!" cried the widow Fulvia to the wife of Pansa, as they leaned down from their lofty bench, "do you see that gigantic gladiator? how drolly he is dressed!"

"Yes," said the ædile's wife with complacent importance, for she knew all the names and qualities of each combatant; "he is a retiarius or netter; he is armed only, you see, with a three-pronged spear like a trident, and a net; he wears no armor, only the fillet and the tunic. He is a mighty man, and is to fight with Sporus, yon thick-set gladiator, with the round shield and drawn sword, but without body armor; he has not his helmet on now, in order that you may see his face, how fearless it is!—by and by he will fight with his vizor down."

"But surely a net and a spear are poor arms against a shield and sword?"

"That shows how innocent you are, my dear Fulvia; the retiarius has generally the best of it."

"But who is yon handsome gladiator, nearly naked—is it not quite improper? By Venus! but his limbs are beautifully shaped!"

"It is Lydon, a young untried man; he has the rashness to fight yon other gladiator similarly dressed, or rather undressed—Tetraides. They fight first in the Greek fashion, with the cestus; afterwards they put on armor, and try sword and shield."

"He is a proper man, this Lydon; and the women, I am sure, are on his side."

"So are not the experienced betters; Clodius offers three to one against him."

"Oh, Jove! how beautiful!" exclaimed the widow, as two gladiators, armed cap-à-pié, rode round the arena on light and prancing steeds. Resembling much the combatants in the tilts of the middle age, they bore lances and round shields beautifully inlaid; their armor was woven intricately with bands of iron, but it covered only the thighs and the right arms; short cloaks, extending to the seat, gave a picturesque and graceful air to their costume; their legs were naked with the exception of sandals, which were fastened a little above the ankle. "Oh, beautiful! who are these?" asked the widow.

"The one is named Berbix—he has conquered twelve times; the other assumes the arrogant name of Nobilior. They are both Gauls."

While thus conversing, the first formalities of the show were over. To these succeeded a feigned combat with wooden swords between the various gladiators matched against each other. Amongst these, the skill of two Roman gladiators, hired for the occasion, was the most admired; and next to them the most graceful combatant was Lydon. This sham contest did not last above an hour, nor did it attract any very lively interest, except among those connoisseurs of the arena to whom art was preferable to more coarse excitement; the body of the spectators were rejoiced when it was over; and when the sympathy rose to terror. The combatants were now arranged in pairs, as agreed beforehand; their weapons examined; and the grave sports of the day commenced amidst the deepest silence—broken only by an exciting and preliminary blast of warlike music.

It was often customary to begin the sports by the most cruel of all, and some bestiarius, or gladiator appointed to the beasts, was slain first, as an initiatory sacrifice. But in the present instance, the experienced Pansa thought it better that the sanguinary drama should advance, not decrease, in interest; and, accordingly, the execution of Olinthus and Glaucus was reserved for the last. It was arranged that the two horsemen should first occupy the arena; that the foot gladiators, paired off, should then be loosed indiscriminately on the stage; that Glaucus and the lion should next perform their part in the bloody spectacle; and the tiger and the Nazarene be the grand finale.

And, in the spectacles of Pompeii, the reader of Roman history must limit his imagination, nor expect to find those vast and wholesale exhibitions of magnificent slaughter with which a Nero or a Caligula regaled the inhabitants of the Imperial City. The Roman shows, which absorbed the more celebrated gladiators, and the chief proportion of foreign beasts, were indeed the very reason why, in the lesser towns of the empire, the sports of the amphitheatre were comparatively humane and rare; and in this, as in other respects, Pompeii was but the miniature, the microcosm of Rome. Still, it

was an awful and imposing spectacle, with which modern times have, happily, nothing to compare;—a vast theatre, rising row upon row, and swarming with human beings, from fifteen to eighteen thousand in number, intent upon no fictitious representation—no tragedy of the stage—but the actual victory or defeat, the exultant life or the bloody death, of each and all who entered the arena!

The two horsemen were now at either extremity of the lists (if so they might be called); and at a given signal from Pansa, the combatants started simultaneously as in full collision, each advancing his round buckler, each poising on high his light yet sturdy javelin; but just when within three paces of his opponent, the steed of Berbix suddenly halted, wheeled round, and, as Nobilior was borne rapidly by, his antagonist spurred upon him. The buckler of Nobilior, quickly and skilfully extended, received a blow which otherwise would have been fatal.

"Well done, Nobilior!" cried the prætor, giving the first vent to the popular excitement.

"Bravely struck, my Berbix!" answered Clodius from his seat.

And the wild murmur, swelled by many a shout, echoed from side to side.

The vizors of both the horsemen were completely closed (like those of the knights in after times), but the head was, nevertheless, the great point of assault; and Nobilior, now wheeling his charger with no less adroitness than his opponent, directed his spear full on the helmet of his foe. Berbix raised his buckler to shield himself; and his quick-eyed antagonist, suddenly lowering his weapon, pierced him through the breast. Berbix reeled and fell.

"Nobilior! Nobilior!" shouted the populace.

"I have lost ten sestertia," * said Clodius, between his teeth.

"*Habet!*—he has it," said Pansa, deliberately.

The populace, not yet hardened into cruelty, made the signal of mercy; but as the attendants of the arena approached, they found the kindness came too late;—the heart of the Gaul had been pierced, and his eyes were set in death. It was his life's blood that flowed so darkly over the sand and sawdust of the arena.

"It is a pity it was so soon over—there was little enough for one's trouble," said the widow Fulvia.

"Yes—I have no compassion for Berbix. Any one might have seen that Nobilior did but feint. Mark, they fix the fatal hook to the body—they drag him away to the spoliarium—they scatter new sand over the stage! Pansa regrets nothing more than that he is not rich enough to strew the arena with borax and cinnabar, as Nero used to do."

"Well, if it has been a brief battle, it is quickly succeeded. See my handsome Lydon on the arena—ay, and the net-bearer too, and the swordsmen! Oh, charming!"

There were now on the arena six combatants: Niger and his net, matched against Sporus with his shield and his short broadsword—Lydon and Tetraides, naked save by a cincture round the waist, each armed only with a heavy Greek cestus—and two gladiators from Rome, clad in complete steel, and evenly matched with immense bucklers and pointed swords.

The initiatory contest between Lydon and Tetraides being less deadly than that between the other combatants, no sooner had they advanced to the middle of the arena than, as by common consent, the rest held back, to see how that contest should be decided, and wait till fiercer weapons might replace the cestus, ere they themselves commenced hostilities. They stood leaning on their arms and apart from each other, gazing on the show, which, if not bloody enough thoroughly to please the populace, they were still inclined to admire, because its origin was of their ancestral Greece.

No person could, at first glance, have seemed less evenly matched than the two antagonists. Tetraides, though not taller than Lydon, weighed considerably more; the natural size of his muscles was increased, to the eyes of the vulgar, by masses of solid flesh; for, as it was a notion that the contest of the cestus fared easiest with him who was plumpest, Tetraides had encouraged to the utmost his hereditary predisposition to the portly. His shoulders were vast, and his lower limbs

* A little more than 80*l*.

thickset, double-jointed, and slightly curved outward, in that formation which takes so much from beauty to give so largely to strength. But Lydon, except that he was slender even almost to meagreness, was beautifully and delicately proportioned; and the skilful might have perceived that, with much less compass of muscle than his foe, that which he had was more seasoned—iron and compact. In proportion, too, as he wanted flesh, he was likely to possess activity; and a haughty smile on his resolute face, which strongly contrasted the solid heaviness of his enemy's, gave assurance to those who beheld it, and united their hope to their pity: so that, despite the disparity of their seeming strength, the cry of the multitude was nearly as loud for Lydon as for Tetraides.

Whoever is acquainted with the modern prize-ring—whoever has witnessed the heavy and disabling strokes which the human fist, skilfully directed, hath the power to bestow—may easily understand how much that happy facility would be increased by a band carried by thongs of leather round the arm as high as the elbow, and terribly strengthened about the knuckles by a plate of iron, and sometimes a plummet of lead. Yet this, which was meant to increase, perhaps rather diminished, the interest of the fray; for it necessarily shortened its duration. A very few blows, successfully and scientifically *planted*, might suffice to bring the contest to a close; and the battle did not, therefore, often allow full scope for the energy, fortitude, and dogged perseverance, that we technically style *pluck*, which not unusually wins the day against superior science, and which heightens to so painful a delight the interest in the battle and the sympathy for the brave.

"Guard thyself!" growled Tetraides, moving nearer and nearer to his foe, who rather shifted round him than receded.

Lydon did not answer, save by a scornful glance of his quick, vigilant eye. Tetraides struck—it was as the blow of a smith on a vice; Lydon sank suddenly on one knee—the blow passed over his head. Not so harmless was Lydon's retaliation: he quickly sprung to his feet, and aimed his cestus full on the broad breast of his antagonist. Tetraides reeled—the populace shouted.

"You are unlucky to-day," said Lepidus to Clodius: "you have lost one bet—you will lose another."

"By the gods! my bronzes go to the auctioneer if that is the case. I have no less than a hundred sestertia* upon Tetraides. Ha, ha! see how he rallies! That was a home stroke: he has cut open Lydon's shoulder.—A Tetraides!—a Tetraides!"

"But Lydon is not disheartened. By Pollux! how well he keeps his temper. See how dexterously he avoids those hammer-like hands!—dodging now here, now there—circling round and round. Ah, poor Lydon! he has it again."

"Three to one still on Tetraides! What say you, Lepidus?"

"Well—nine sestertia to three—be it so! What! again, Lydon? He stops—he gasps for breath. By the gods, he is down! No—he is again on his legs. Brave Lydon! Tetraides is encouraged—he laughs loud—he rushes on him."

"Fool!—success blinds him—he should be cautious. Lydon's eye is like a lynx's!" said Clodius, between his teeth.

"Ha, Clodius! saw you that? Your man totters! Another blow—he falls—he falls!"

"Earth revives him, then. He is once more up; but the blood rolls down his face."

"By the thunderer! Lydon wins it. See how he presses on him! That blow on the temple would have crushed an ox; it *has* crushed Tetraides. He falls again—he cannot move—*habet!—habet!*"

"*Habet!*" repeated Pansa. "Take them out and give them the armor and swords."

"Noble editor," said the officers, "we fear that Tetraides will not recover in time; howbeit, we will try."

"Do so."

In a few moments the officers, who had dragged off the stunned and insensible gladiator, returned with rueful countenances. They feared for his life; he was utterly incapacitated from re-entering the arena.

"In that case," said Pansa, "hold Lydon a *subditius;* and the first gladiator that is vanquished, let Lydon supply his place with the victor."

The people shouted their applause at this

* Above 800*l*.

sentence; then they again sunk into deep silence. The trumpets sounded loudly. The four combatants stood each against each in prepared and stern array.

"Dost thou recognize the Romans, my Clodius? Are they among the celebrated, or are they merely *ordinarii?*"

"Eumolpus is a good second-rate swordsman, my Lepidus. Nepimus, the lesser man, I have never seen before; but he is the son of one of the imperial fiscales,* and brought up in a proper school; doubtless they will show sport. But I have no heart for the game; I cannot win back my money—I am undone. Curses on that Lydon! who could have supposed he was so dexterous or so lucky?"

"Well, Clodius, shall I take compassion on you, and accept your own terms with these Romans?"

"An even ten sestertia on Eumolpus, then?"

"What! when Nepimus is untried? Nay, nay; that is too bad."

"Well—ten to eight?"

"Agreed."

While the contest in the amphitheatre had thus commenced, there was one in the loftier benches for whom it had assumed, indeed, a poignant—a stifling interest. The aged father of Lydon, despite his Christian horror of the spectacle, in his agonized anxiety for his son, had not been able to resist being the spectator of his fate. One amidst a fierce crowd of strangers—the lowest rabble of the populace—the old man saw, felt nothing, but the form—the presence of his brave son! Not a sound had escaped his lips when twice he had seen him fall to the earth;—only he had turned paler, and his limbs trembled. But he had uttered one low cry when he saw him victorious;—unconscious, alas! of the more fearful battle to which that victory was but a prelude.

"My gallant boy!" said he, and wiped his eyes.

"Is he thy son?" said a brawny fellow to the right of the Nazarene; "he has fought well: let us see how he does by and by. Hark! he is to fight the first victor. Now, old boy, pray the gods that that victor be neither of the Romans! nor, next to them, the giant Niger."

The old man sat down again and covered his face. The fray for the moment was indifferent to him—Lydon was not one of the combatants. Yet—yet—the thought flashed across him—the fray was indeed of deadly interest—the first who fell was to make way for Lydon! He started, and bent down, with straining eyes and clasped hands, to view the encounter.

The first interest was attracted towards the combat of Niger with Sporus; for this species of contest, from the fatal result which usually attended it, and from the great science it required in either antagonist, was always peculiarly inviting to the spectators.

They stood at a considerable distance from each other. The singular helmet which Sporus wore (the vizor of which was down) concealed his face; but the features of Niger attracted a fearful and universal interest from their compressed and vigilant ferocity. Thus they stood for some moments, each eyeing each, until Sporus began slowly, and with great caution, to advance, holding his sword pointed, like a modern fencer's, at the breast of his foe. Niger retreated as his antagonist advanced, gathering up his net with his right hand, and never taking his small glittering eye from the movements of the swordsman. Suddenly, when Sporus had approached nearly at arm's length, the retiarius threw himself forward, and cast his net. A quick inflection of body saved the gladiator from the deadly snare; he uttered a sharp cry of joy and rage, and rushed upon Niger: but Niger had already drawn in his net, thrown it across his shoulders, and now fled round the lists with a swiftness which the *secutor* * in vain endeavored to equal. The people laughed and shouted aloud, to see the ineffectual efforts of the broad-shouldered gladiator to overtake the flying giant: when, at that moment, their attention was turned from these to the two Roman combatants.

They had placed themselves at the onset face to face, at the distance of modern fen-

* Gladiators maintained by the emperor.

* So called, from the office of that tribe of gladiators, in *following* the foe the moment the net was cast, in order to smite him ere he could have time to re-arrange it.

cers from each other: but the extreme caution which both evinced at first had prevented any warmth of engagement, and allowed the spectators full leisure to interest themselves in the battle between Sporus and his foe. But the Romans were now heated into full and fierce encounter: they pushed —returned—advanced on—retreated from—each other with all that careful yet scarcely perceptible caution which characterizes men well experienced and equally matched. But at this moment, Eumolpus, the elder gladiator, by that dexterous back-stroke which was considered in the arena so difficult to avoid, had wounded Nepimus in the side. The people shouted; Lepidus turned pale.

"Ho!" said Clodius, "the game is nearly over. If Eumolpus fights now the quiet fight, the other will gradually bleed himself away."

"But, thank the gods! he does *not* fight the backward fight. See!—he presses hard upon Nepimus. By Mars! but Nepimus had him there! the helmet rang again!—Clodius, I shall win!"

"Why do I ever bet but at the dice?" groaned Clodius to himself,—"or why cannot one cog a gladiator?"

"A Sporus!—a Sporus!" shouted the populace, as Niger, having now suddenly paused, had again cast his net, and again unsuccessfully. He had not retreated this time with sufficient agility—the sword of Sporus had inflicted a severe wound upon his right leg; and, incapacitated to fly, he was pressed hard by the fierce swordsman. His great height and length of arm still continued, however, to give him no despicable advantages; and steadily keeping his trident at the front of his foe, he repelled him successfully for several minutes. Sporus now tried, by great rapidity of evolution, to get round his antagonist, who necessarily moved with pain and slowness. In so doing, he lost his caution—he advanced too near to the giant—raised his arm to strike, and received the three points of the fatal spear full in his breast! He sank on his knee. In a moment more, the deadly net was cast over him,—he struggled against its meshes in vain; again—again—again he writhed mutely beneath the fresh strokes of the trident—his blood flowed fast through the net and redly over the sand. He lowered his arms in acknowledgment of defeat.

The conquering retiarius withdrew his net, and leaning on his spear, looked to the audience for their judgment. Slowly, too, at the same moment, the vanquished gladiator rolled his dim and despairing eyes around the theatre. From row to row, from bench to bench, there glared upon him but merciless and unpitying eyes.

Hushed was the roar—the murmur! The silence was dread, for in it was no sympathy; not a hand—no, not even a woman's hand—gave the signal of charity and life! Sporus had never been popular in the arena; and, lately, the interest of the combat had been excited on behalf of the wounded Niger. The people were warmed into blood—the *mimic* fight had ceased to charm; the interest had mounted up to the desire of sacrifice and the thirst of death!

The gladiator felt that his doom was sealed: he uttered no prayer—no groan. The people gave the signal of death! In dogged but agonized submission, he bent his neck to receive the fatal stroke. And now, as the spear of the retiarius was not a weapon to inflict instant and certain death, there stalked into the arena a grim and fatal form, brandishing a short, sharp sword, and with features utterly concealed beneath its vizor. With slow and measured steps, this dismal headsman approached the gladiator, still kneeling—laid the left hand on his humbled crest—drew the edge of the blade across his neck—turned round to the assembly, lest, in the last moment, remorse should come upon them; the dread signal continued the same: the blade glittered brightly in the air—fell—and the gladiator rolled upon the sand; his limbs quivered—were still,—he was a corpse.*

His body was dragged at once from the arena through the gate of death, and thrown into the gloomy den termed technically the spoliarium. And ere it had well reached that destination, the strife between the remaining combatants was decided. The sword of Eumolpus had inflicted the death-wound upon the less experienced combatant. A new

* See the engraving from the friezes of Pompeii, in the work on that city, published in the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge*, vol. ii., p. 311.

victim was added to the receptacle of the slain.

Throughout that mighty assembly there now ran a universal movement; the people breathed more freely, and resettled themselves in their seats. A grateful shower was cast over every row from the concealed conduits. In cool and luxurious pleasure they talked over the late spectacle of blood. Eumolpus removed his helmet, and wiped his brows; his close-curled hair and short beard, his noble Roman features and bright dark eye, attracted the general admiration. He was fresh, unwounded, unfatigued.

The editor paused, and proclaimed aloud that, as Niger's wound disabled him from again entering the arena, Lydon was to be the successor to the slaughtered Nepimus, and the new combatant of Eumolpus.

"Yet, Lydon," added he, "if thou wouldst decline the combat with one so brave and tried, thou mayst have full liberty to do so. Eumolpus is not the antagonist that was originally decreed for thee. Thou knowest best how far thou canst cope with him. If thou failest, thy doom is honorable death; if thou conquerest, out of my own purse I will double the stipulated prize."

The people shouted applause. Lydon stood in the lists, he gazed around; high above he beheld the pale face, the straining eyes of his father. He turned away irresolute for a moment. No! the conquest of the cestus was not sufficient—he had not yet won the prize of victory—his father was still a slave!

"Noble ædile!" he replied, in a firm and deep tone, "I shrink not from this combat. For the honor of Pompeii, I demand that one trained by its long-celebrated lanista shall do battle with this Roman."

The people shouted louder than before.

"Four to one against Lydon!" said Clodius to Lepidus.

"I would not take twenty to one! Why, Eumolpus is a very Achilles, and this poor fellow is but a *tyro!*"

Eumolpus gazed hard on the face of Lydon; he smiled: yet the smile was followed by a slight and scarce audible sigh—a touch of compassionate emotion, which custom conquered the moment the heart acknowledged it.

And now both, clad in complete armor, the sword drawn, the vizor closed, the two last combatants of the arena (ere man, at least, was matched with beast), stood opposed to each other.

It was just at this time that a letter was delivered to the prætor by one of the attendants of the arena; he removed the cincture—glanced over it for a moment—his countenance betrayed surprise and embarrassment. He re-read the letter, and then muttering,—"Tush! it is impossible!—the man must be drunk, even in the morning, to dream of such follies!"—threw it carelessly aside, and gravely settled himself once more in the attitude of attention to the sports.

The interest of the public was wound up very high. Eumolpus had at first won their favor; but the gallantry of Lydon, and his well-timed allusion to the honor of the Pompeian lanista, had afterwards given the latter the preference in their eyes.

"Holla, old fellow!" said Medon's neighbor to him. "Your son is hardly matched; but never fear, the editor will not permit him to be slain,—no, nor the people neither; he has behaved too bravely for that. Ha! that was a home thrust!—well averted, by Pollux! At him again, Lydon!—they stop to breathe! What art thou muttering, old boy?"

"Prayers!" answered Medon, with a more calm and hopeful mien than he had yet maintained.

"Prayers!—trifles! The time for gods to carry a man away in a cloud is gone now. Ha, Jupiter!—what a blow! Thy side—thy side!—take care of thy side, Lydon!"

There was a convulsive tremor throughout the assembly. A fierce blow from Eumolpus, full on the crest, had brought Lydon to his knee.

"*Habet!*—he has it!" cried a shrill female voice; "he has it!"

It was the voice of the girl who had so anxiously anticipated the sacrifice of some criminal to the beasts.

"Be silent, child!" said the wife of Pansa, haughtily. "*Non habet!*—he is *not* wounded!"

"I wish he were, if only to spite old surly Medon," muttered the girl.

Meanwhile Lydon, who had hitherto de-

fended himself with great skill and valor, began to give way before the vigorous assaults of the practised Roman; his arm grew tired, his eye dizzy, he breathed hard and painfully. The combatants paused again for breath.

"Young man," said Eumolpus, in a low voice, "desist; I will wound thee slightly—then lower thy arms; thou hast propitiated the editor and the mob—thou wilt be honorably saved!"

"And my father still enslaved!" groaned Lydon to himself. "No! death or his freedom."

At that thought, and seeing that, his strength not being equal to the endurance of the Roman, everything depended on a sudden and desperate effort, he threw himself fiercely on Eumolpus; the Roman warily retreated—Lydon thrust again—Eumolpus drew himself aside—the sword grazed his cuirass—Lydon's breast was exposed—the Roman plunged his sword through the joints of the armor, not meaning, however, to inflict a deep wound; Lydon, weak and exhausted, fell forward—fell right on the point: it passed through and through, even to the back! Eumolpus drew forth his blade; Lydon still made an effort to regain his balance—his sword left his grasp—he struck mechanically at the gladiator with his naked hand, and fell postrate on the arena. With one accord, editor and assembly made the signal of mercy—the officers of the arena approached—they took off the helmet of the vanquished. He still breathed; his eyes rolled fiercely on his foe; the savageness he had acquired in his calling glared from his gaze, and lowered upon the brow darkened already with the shades of death; then, with a convulsive groan, with a half start, he lifted his eyes above. They rested not on the face of the editor nor on the pitying brows of his relenting judges. He saw them not; they were as if the vast space was desolate and bare; one pale agonizing face alone was all he recognized—one cry of a broken heart was all that, amidst the murmurs and the shouts of the populace, reached his ear. The ferocity vanished from his brow; a soft, a tender expression of sanctifying but despairing filial love played over his features—played—waned—darkened! His face suddenly became locked and rigid, resuming its former fierceness. He fell upon the earth.

"Look to him," said the ædile; "he has done his duty!"

The officers dragged him off to the spoliarium.

"A true type of glory, and of its fate!" murmured Arbaces to himself: and his eye, glancing round the amphitheatre, betrayed so much of disdain and scorn, that whoever encountered it felt his breath suddenly arrested, and his emotions frozen into one sensation of abasement and of awe.

Again rich perfumes were wafted around the theatre; the attendants sprinkled fresh sand over the arena.

"Bring forth the lion and Glaucus the Athenian," said the editor.

And a deep and breathless hush of overwrought interest, and intense (yet, strange to say, not unpleasing) terror lay, like a mighty and awful dream, over the assembly.

CHAPTER III.

SALLUST AND NYDIA'S LETTER.

THRICE had Sallust wakened from his morning sleep, and thrice, recollecting that his friend was that day to perish, had he turned himself with a deep sigh once more to court oblivion. His sole object in life was to avoid pain; and where he could not avoid, at least to forget it.

At length, unable any longer to steep his consciousness in slumber, he raised himself from his incumbent posture, and discovered his favorite freedman sitting by his bedside as usual; for Sallust, who, as I have said, had a gentlemanlike taste for the polite letters, was accustomed to be read to for an hour or so previous to his rising in the morning.

"No books to-day! no more Tibullus! no more Pindar for me! Pindar! alas, alas! the very name recalls those games to which our arena is the savage successor. Has it begun—the amphitheatre? are its rites commenced?"

"Long since, O Sallust! Did you not hear the trumpets and the trampling feet?"

"Ay, ay; but the gods be thanked, I was drowsy, and had only to turn round to fall asleep again."

"The gladiators must have been long in the ring?"

"The wretches! None of my people have gone to the spectacle?"

"Assuredly not; your orders were too strict."

"That is well—would the day were over! What is that letter yonder on the table?"

"That! Oh, the letter brought to you last night, when you were too—too——"

"Drunk to read it, I suppose. No matter; it cannot be of much importance."

"Shall I open it for you, Sallust?"

"Do: anything to divert my thoughts. Poor Glaucus!"

The freedman opened the letter. "What! Greek?" said he; "some learned lady, I suppose." He glanced over the letter, and for some moments the irregular lines traced by the blind girl's hand puzzled him. Suddenly, however, his countenance exhibited emotion and surprise. "Good gods! noble Sallust! what have we done not to attend to this before? Hear me read!

"'Nydia, the slave, to Sallust, the friend of Glaucus! I am a prisoner in the house of Arbaces. Hasten to the prætor! procure my release, and we shall yet save Glaucus from the lion. There is another prisoner within these walls, whose witness can exonerate the Athenian from the charge against him;—one who saw the crime—who can prove the criminal in a villain hitherto unsuspected. Fly! hasten! quick! quick! Bring with you armed men, lest resistance be made,—and a cunning and dexterous smith; for the dungeon-door of my fellow-prisoner is thick and strong. Oh! by thy right hand, and thy father's ashes, lose not a moment!'"

"Great Jove!" exclaimed Sallust, starting, "and this day—nay, within this hour, perhaps, he dies. What is to be done? I will instantly to the prætor."

"Nay; not so. The prætor—(as well as Pansa, the editor himself)—is the creature of the mob; and the mob will not hear of delay; they will not be balked in the very moment of expectation. Besides, the publicity of the appeal would forewarn the cunning Egyptian. It is evident that he has some interest in these concealments. No; fortunately thy slaves are in thy house."

"I seize thy meaning," interrupted Sallust; "arm the slaves instantly. The streets are empty. We will ourselves hasten to the house of Arbaces, and release the prisoners. Quick! quick! What ho! Davus there! My gown and sandals, the papyrus and a reed.* I will write to the prætor, to beseech him to delay the sentence of Glaucus, for that, within an hour, we may yet prove him innocent. So, so; that is well. Hasten with this, Davus, to the prætor, at the amphitheatre. See it given to his own hand. Now, then, O ye gods, whose providence Epicurus denied, befriend me, and I will call Epicurus a liar!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMPHITHEATRE ONCE MORE.

GLAUCUS and Olinthus had been placed together in that gloomy and narrow cell in which the criminals of the arena awaited their last and fearful struggle. Their eyes, of late accustomed to the darkness, scanned the faces of each other in this awful hour, and by that dim light, the paleness, which chased away the natural hues from either cheek, assumed a yet more ashy and ghastly whiteness. Yet their brows were erect and dauntless—their limbs did not tremble—their lips were compressed and rigid. The religion of the one, the pride of the other, the conscious innocence of both, and it may be the support derived from their mutual companionship, elevated the victim into the hero!

"Hark! hearest thou that shout? They are growling over their human blood," said Olinthus.

"I hear; my heart grows sick; but the gods support me."

"The gods! O rash young man! in this hour recognize only the One God. Have I not taught thee in the dungeon, wept for

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* The reed (*calamus*) was used for writing on papyrus and parchment; the stylus for writing on waxen tablets, plates of metal, &c. Letters were written sometimes on tablets, sometimes on papyrus.

thee, prayed for thee?—in my zeal and in my agony, have I not thought more of thy salvation than my own?"

"Brave friend!" answered Glaucus, solemnly, "I have listened to thee with awe, with wonder, and with a secret tendency towards conviction. Had our lives been spared, I might gradually have weaned myself from the tenets of my own faith, and inclined to thine; but, in this last hour, it were a craven thing, and a base, to yield to hasty terror what should only be the result of lengthened meditation. Were I to embrace thy creed, and cast down my father's gods, should I not be bribed by thy promise of heaven, or awed by thy threats of hell? Olinthus, no! Think we of each other with equal charity—I honoring thy sincerity—thou pitying my blindness or my obdurate courage. As have been my deeds, such will be my reward; and the Power or Powers above will not judged harshly of human error, when it is linked with honesty of purpose and truth of heart. Speak we no more of this. Hush! Dost thou hear them drag yon heavy body through the passage? Such as that clay will be ours soon."

"O Heaven! O Christ! already I behold ye!" cried the fervent Olinthus, lifting up his hands; "I tremble not—I rejoice that the prison-house shall be soon broken."

Glaucus bowed his head in silence. He felt the distinction between his fortitude and that of his fellow-sufferer. The heathen did not tremble; but the Christian exulted.

The door swung gratingly back—the gleam of spears shot along the walls.

"Glaucus, the Athenian, thy time has come," said a loud and clear voice; "the lion awaits thee."

"I am ready," said the Athenian. "Brother and co-mote, one last embrace! Bless me—and, farewell!"

The Christian opened his arms—he clasped the young heathen to his breast—he kissed his forehead and cheek—he sobbed aloud—his tears flowed fast and hot over the features of his new friend.

"Oh! could I have converted thee, I had not wept. Oh! that I might say to thee, 'We two shall sup this night in Paradise!'"

"It may be so yet," answered the Greek with a tremulous voice. "They whom death part not, may meet yet beyond the grave on the earth—on the beautiful, the beloved earth, farewell for ever!—Worthy officer, I attend you."

Glaucus tore himself away; and when he came forth into the air, its breath, which, though sunless, was hot and arid, smote witheringly upon him. His frame, not yet restored from the effects of the deadly draught, shrank and trembled. The officers supported him.

"Courage!" said one; "thou art young, active, well knit. They give thee a weapon! despair not, and thou mayst yet conquer."

Glaucus did not reply; but, ashamed of his infirmity, he made a desperate and convulsive effort, and regained the firmness of his nerves. They anointed his body, completely naked save by a cincture round the loins, placed the stilus (vain weapon!) in his hand, and led him into the arena.

And now when the Greek saw the eyes of thousands and tens of thousands upon him, he no longer felt that he was mortal. All evidence of fear—all fear itself—was gone. A red and haughty flush spread over the paleness of his features—he towered aloft to the full of his glorious stature. In the elastic beauty of his limbs and form, in his intent but unfrowning brow, in the high disdain, and in the indomitable soul, which breathed visibly, which spoke audibly, from his attitude, his lip, his eye,—he seemed the very incarnation, vivid and corporeal, of the valor of his land—of the divinity of its worship—at once a hero and a god!

The murmur of hatred and horror at his crime, which had greeted his entrance, died into the silence of involuntary admiration and half-compassionate respect; and, with a quick and convulsive sigh, that seemed to move the whole mass of life as if it were one body, the gaze of the spectators turned from the Athenian to a dark uncouth object in the centre of the arena. It was the grated den of the lion!

"By Venus, how warm it is!" said Fulvia; "yet there is no sun. Would that those stupid sailors * could have fastened up that gap in the awning!"

"Oh! it is warm, indeed. I turn sick—

* Sailors were generally employed in fastening the *velaria* of the amphitheatre.

I faint!" said the wife of Pansa; even her experienced stoicism giving way at the struggle about to take place.

The lion had been kept without food for twenty-four hours, and the animal had, during the whole morning, testified a singular and restless uneasiness, which the keeper had attributed to the pangs of hunger. Yet its bearing seemed rather that of fear than of rage; its roar was painful and distressed; it hung its head—snuffed the air through the bars—then lay down—started again—and again uttered its wild and far-resounding cries. And now, in its den, it lay utterly dumb and mute, with distended nostrils forced hard against the grating, and disturbing, with a heaving breath, the sand below on the arena.

The editor's lip quivered, and his cheek grew pale; he looked anxiously around—hesitated—delayed; the crowd became impatient. Slowly he gave the sign; the keeper, who was behind the den, cautiously removed the grating, and the lion leaped forth with a mighty and glad roar of release. The keeper hastily retreated through the grated passage leading from the arena, and left the lord of the forest—and his prey.

Glaucus had bent his limbs so as to give himself the firmest posture at the expected rush of the lion, with his small and shining weapon raised on high, in the faint hope that *one* well-directed thrust (for he knew that he should have time but for *one*) might penetrate through the eye to the brain of his grim foe.

But, to the unutterable astonishment of all, the beast seemed not even aware of the presence of the criminal.

At the first moment of its release it halted abruptly in the arena, raised itself half on end, snuffing the upward air with impatient sighs; then suddenly it sprung forward, but not on the Athenian. At half-speed it circled round and round the space, turning its vast head from side to side with an anxious and perturbed gaze, as if seeking only some avenue of escape; once or twice it endeavored to leap up the parapet that divided it from the audience, and, on failing, uttered rather a baffled howl than its deep-toned and kingly roar. It evinced no sign, either of wrath or hunger; its tail drooped along the sand, instead of lashing its gaunt sides; and its eye, though it wandered at times to Glaucus, rolled again listlessly from him. At length, as if tired of attempting to escape, it crept with a moan into its cage, and once more laid itself down to rest.

The first surprise of the assembly at the apathy of the lion soon grew converted into resentment at its cowardice; and the populace already merged their pity for the fate of Glaucus into angry compassion for their own disappointment.

The editor called to the keeper.

"How is this? Take the goad, prick him forth, and then close the door of the den."

As the keeper, with some fear, but more astonishment, was preparing to obey, a loud cry was heard at one of the entrances of the arena; there was a confusion, a bustle—voices of remonstrance suddenly breaking forth, and suddenly silenced at the reply. All eyes turned, in wonder at the interruption, towards the quarter of the disturbance; the crowd gave way, and suddenly Sallust appeared on the senatorial benches, his hair dishevelled — breathless — heated — half-exhausted. He cast his eyes hastily round the ring. "Remove the Athenian!" he cried; "haste—he is innocent! Arrest Arbaces the Egyptian—HE is the murderer of Apæcides!"

"Art thou mad, O Sallust!" said the prætor, rising from his seat. "What means this raving?"

"Remove the Athenian!—Quick! or his blood be on your head. Prætor, delay, and you answer with your own life to the emperor! I bring with me the eye-witness to the death of the priest Apæcides. Room there!—stand back!—give way! People of Pompeii, fix every eye upon Arbaces—there he sits! Room there for the priest Calenus!"

Pale, haggard, fresh from the jaws of famine and of death, his face fallen, his eyes dull as a vulture's, his broad frame gaunt as a skeleton,—Calenus was supported into the very row in which Arbaces sat. His releasers had given him sparingly of food; but the chief sustenance that nerved his feeble limbs was revenge!

"The priest Calenus!—Calenus!"—cried

the mob. "*Is* it he? No—it is a dead man!"

"It *is* the priest Calenus," said the prætor, gravely. "What hast thou to say?"

"Arbaces of Egypt is the murderer of Apæcides, the priest of Isis; these eyes saw him deal the blow. It is from the dungeon into which he plunged me—it is from the darkness and horror of a death by famine—that the gods have raised me to proclaim his crime! Release the Athenian—*he* is innocent!"

"It is for this, then, that the lion spared him.—A miracle! a miracle!" cried Pansa.

"A miracle! a miracle!" shouted the people; "remove the Athenian—*Arbaces to the lion!*"

And that shout echoed from hill to vale—from coast to sea—"*Arbaces to the lion!*"

"Officers, remove the accused Glaucus—remove, but guard him yet," said the prætor. "The gods lavish their wonders upon this day."

As the prætor gave the word of release, there was a cry of joy—a female voice—a child's voice—and it was of joy! It rang through the heart of the assembly with electric force—it was touching, it was holy, that child's voice! And the populace echoed it back with sympathizing congratulation!

"Silence!" said the grave prætor—"who is there?"

"The blind girl—Nydia," answered Sallust; "it is her hand that has raised Calenus from the grave, and delivered Glaucus from the lion."

"Of this hereafter," said the prætor. "Calenus, priest of Isis, thou accusest Arbaces of the murder of Apæcides?"

"I do!"

"Thou didst behold the deed?"

"Prætor—with these eyes——"

"Enough at present—the details must be reserved for more suiting time and place. Arbaces of Egypt, thou hearest the charge against thee—thou hast not yet spoken—what hast thou to say?"

The gaze of the crowd had been long riveted on Arbaces: but not until the confusion which he had betrayed at the first charge of Sallust and the entrance of Calenus had subsided. At the shout, "Arbaces to the lion!" he had indeed trembled, and the dark bronze of his cheek had taken a paler hue. But he had soon recovered his haughtiness and self-control. Proudly he returned the angry glare of the countless eyes around him; and replying now to the question of the prætor, he said, in that accent, so peculiarly tranquil and commanding, which characterized his tones,—

"Prætor, this charge is so mad that it scarcely deserves reply. My first accuser is the noble Sallust—the most intimate friend of Glaucus! my second is a priest; I revere his garb and calling—but, people of Pompeii! ye know somewhat of the character of Calenus—he is griping and gold-thirsty to a proverb; the witness of such men is to be bought! Prætor, I am innocent!"

"Sallust," said the magistrate, "where found you Calenus?"

"In the dungeons of Arbaces."

"Egyptian," said the prætor, frowning, "thou didst, then, dare to imprison a priest of the gods—and wherefore?"

"Hear me," answered Arbaces, rising calmly, but with agitation visible in his face. "This man came to threaten that he would make against me the charge he has now made, unless I would purchase his silence with half my fortune: I remonstrated—in vain. Peace there—let not the priest interrupt me! Noble prætor—and ye! O people! I was a stranger in the land—I knew myself innocent of crime—but the witness of a priest against me might yet destroy me. In my perplexity I decoyed him to the cell whence he has been released, on pretence that it was the coffer-house of my gold. I resolved to detain him there until the fate of the true criminal was sealed, and his threats could avail no longer; but I meant no worse. I may have erred—but who amongst ye will not acknowledge the equity of self-preservation? Were I guilty, why was the witness of this priest silent at the trial?—*then* I had not detained or concealed him. Why did he not proclaim my guilt when I proclaimed that of Glaucus? Prætor, this needs an answer. For the rest, I throw myself on your laws. I demand their protection. Remove hence the accused and the accuser. I will willingly meet, and cheerfully abide by, the decision of the legitimate tribunal. This is no place for further parley."

"He says right," said the prætor. "Ho! guards—remove Arbaces—guard Calenus! Sallust, we hold you responsible for your accusation. Let the sports be resumed."

"What!" cried Calenus, turning round to the people, "shall Isis be thus contemned? Shall the blood of Apæcides yet cry for vengeance? Shall justice be delayed now, that it may be frustrated hereafter? Shall the lion be cheated of his lawful prey? A god! a god!—I feel the god rush to my lips! *To the lion—to the lion with Arbaces!*"

His exhausted frame could support no longer the ferocious malice of the priest; he sank on the ground in strong convulsions—the foam gathered to his mouth—he was as a man, indeed, whom a supernatural power had entered! The people saw, and shuddered.

"It is a god that inspires the holy man!—*To the lion with the Egyptian!*"

With that cry up sprang—on moved—thousands upon thousands! They rushed from the heights—they poured down in the direction of the Egyptian. In vain did the ædile command—in vain did the prætor lift his voice and proclaim the law. The people had been already rendered savage by the exhibition of blood—they thirsted for more—their superstition was aided by their ferocity. Aroused—inflamed by the spectacle of their victims, they forgot the authority of their rulers. It was one of those dread popular convulsions common to crowds wholly ignorant, half free and half servile; and which the peculiar constitution of the Roman provinces so frequently exhibited. The power of the prætor was as a reed beneath the whirlwind; still, at his word the guards had drawn themselves along the lower benches on which the upper classes sat separate from the vulgar. They made but a feeble barrier—the waves of the human sea halted for a moment, to enable Arbaces to count the exact moment of his doom! In despair, and in a terror which beat down even pride, he glanced his eyes over the rolling and rushing crowd—when, right above them, through the wide chasm which had been left in the velaria, he beheld a strange and awful apparition—he beheld—and his craft restored his courage!

He stretched his hand on high, over his lofty brow and royal features there came an expression of unutterable solemnity and command.

"Behold," he shouted with a voice of thunder, which stilled the roar of the crowd; "behold how the gods protect the guiltless! The fires of the avenging Orcus burst forth against the false witness of my accusers!"

The eyes of the crowd followed the gesture of the Egyptian, and beheld, with ineffable dismay, a vast vapor shooting from the summit of Vesuvius, in the form of a gigantic pine-tree;* the trunk, blackness,—the branches, fire;—a fire that shifted and wavered in its hues with every moment, now fiercely luminous, now of a dull and dying red, that again blazed terrifically forth with intolerable glare!

There was a dead, heart-sunken silence—through which there suddenly broke the roar of the lion, which was echoed back from within the building by the sharper and fiercer yells of its fellow-beast. Dread seers were they of the Burden of the Atmosphere, and wild prophets of the wrath to come!

Then there arose on high the universal shrieks of women; the men stared at each other, but were dumb. At that moment they felt the earth shake beneath their feet; the walls of the theatre trembled: and beyond, in the distance, they heard the crash of falling roofs; an instant more and the mountain-cloud seemed to roll towards them, dark and rapid, like a torrent; at the same time, it cast forth from its bosom a shower of ashes mixed with vast fragments of burning stone! Over the crushing vines,—over the desolate streets,—over the amphitheatre itself,—far and wide,—with many a mighty splash in the agitated sea,—fell that awful shower!

No longer thought the crowd of justice or of Arbaces; safety for themselves was their sole thought. Each turned to fly—each dashing, pressing, crushing, against the other. Trampling recklessly over the fallen—amidst groans, and oaths, and prayers, and sudden shrieks, the enormous crowd vomited itself forth through the numerous passages. Whither should they fly? Some, anticipating a second earthquake, hastened to their homes

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* Pliny.

to load themselves with their more costly goods, and escape while it was yet time; others, dreading the showers of ashes that now fell fast, torrent upon torrent, over the streets, rushed under the roofs of the nearest houses, or temples, or sheds—shelter of any kind—for protection from the terrors of the open air. But darker, and larger, and mightier, spread the cloud above them. It was a sudden and more ghastly Night rushing upon the realm of Noon!

CHAPTER V.

THE CELL OF THE PRISONER AND THE DEN OF THE DEAD.—GRIEF UNCONSCIOUS OF HORROR.

STUNNED by his reprieve, doubting that he was awake, Glaucus had been led by the officers of the arena into a small cell within the walls of the theatre. They threw a loose robe over his form, and crowded round in congratulation and wonder. There was an impatient and fretful cry without the cell; the throng gave way, and the blind girl, led by some gentler hand, flung herself at the feet of Glaucus.

"It is *I* who have saved thee," she sobbed; "now let me die!"

"Nydia, my child!—my preserver!"

"Oh, let me feel thy touch—thy breath! Yes, yes, thou livest! We are not too late! That dread door, methought it would never yield! and Calenus—oh! his voice was as the dying wind among tombs:—we had to wait,—gods! it seemed hours ere food and wine restored to him something of strength. But thou livest! thou livest yet! And I—*I* have saved thee!"

This affecting scene was soon interrupted by the event just described.

"The mountain! the earthquake!" resounded from side to side. The officers fled with the rest; they left Glaucus and Nydia to save themselves as they might.

As the sense of the dangers around them flashed on the Athenian, his generous heart recurred to Olinthus. He, too, was reprieved from the tiger by the hand of the gods; should he be left to a no less fatal death in the neighboring cell? Taking Nydia by the hand, Glaucus hurried across the passages; he gained the den of the Christian. He found Olinthus kneeling, and in prayer.

"Arise! arise! my friend," he cried. "Save thyself, and fly! See! Nature is thy dread deliverer!" He led forth the bewildered Christian, and pointed to a cloud which advanced darker and darker, disgorging forth showers of ashes and pumice stones;—and bade him hearken to the cries and trampling rush of the scattered crowd.

"This is the hand of God—God be praised!" said Olinthus, devoutly.

"Fly! seek thy brethren! Concert with them thy escape. Farewell!"

Olinthus did not answer, neither did he mark the retreating form of his friend. High thoughts and solemn absorbed his soul; and in the enthusiasm of his kindling heart, he exulted in the mercy of God rather than trembled at the evidence of His power.

At length he roused himself, and hurried on, he scarce knew whither.

The open doors of a dark, desolate cell suddenly appeared on his path; through the gloom within there flared and flickered a single lamp; and by its light he saw three grim and naked forms stretched on the earth in death. His feet were suddenly arrested; for amidst the terrors of that drear recess—the spoliarium of the arena—he heard a low voice calling on the name of Christ!

He could not resist lingering at that appeal; he entered the den, and his feet were dabbled in the slow streams of blood that gushed from the corpses over the sand.

"Who," said the Nazarene, "calls upon the Son of God?"

No answer came forth; and turning round, Olinthus beheld, by the light of the lamp, an old gray-headed man sitting on the floor, and supporting in his lap the head of one of the dead. The features of the dead man were firmly and rigidly locked in the last sleep; but over the lip there played a fierce smile—not the Christian's smile of hope,—but the dark sneer of hatred and defiance. Yet on the face still lingered the beautiful roundness of early youth. The hair curled thick and glossy over the unwrinkled brow;

and the down of manhood but slightly shaded the marble of the hueless cheek. And over this face bent one of such unutterable sadness—of such yearning tenderness—of such fond, and such deep despair! The tears of the old man fell fast and hot, but he did not feel them; and when his lips moved, and he mechanically uttered the prayer of his benign and hopeful faith, neither his heart nor his sense responded to the words: it was but the involuntary emotion that broke from the lethargy of his mind. His boy was dead, and had died for him!—and the old man's heart was broken!

"Medon!" said Olinthus, pityingly, "arise, and fly! God is forth upon the wings of the elements!—The New Gomorrah is doomed!—Fly, ere the fires consume thee!"

"He was ever so full of life!—he *cannot* be dead! Come, hither!—place your hand on his heart!—sure it beats yet?"

"Brother, the soul has fled!—we will remember it in our prayers! Thou canst not reanimate the dumb clay! Come, come,—hark! while I speak, yon crashing walls!—hark! yon agonizing cries! Not a moment is to be lost!—Come!"

"I hear nothing!" said Medon, shaking his gray hair. "The poor boy, his love murdered him!"

"Come! come!—forgive this friendly force."

"What! Who would sever the father from the son?" And Medon clasped the body tightly in his embrace, and covered it with passionate kisses. "Go!" said he, lifting up his face for one moment. "Go!—we must be alone!"

"Alas!" said the compassionate Nazarene, "Death hath severed ye already!"

The old man smiled very calmly. "No, no, no!" he muttered, his voice growing lower with each word,—"Death has been more kind!"

With that his head drooped on his son's breast—his arms relaxed their grasp. Olinthus caught him by the hand—the pulse had ceased to beat! The last words of the father were the words of truth,—*Death had been more kind!*

Meanwhile Glaucus and Nydia were pacing swiftly up the perilous and fearful streets. The Athenian had learned from his preserver that Ione was yet in the house of Arbaces. Thither he fled, to release—to save her! The few slaves whom the Egyptian had left at his mansion when he had repaired in long procession to the amphitheatre had been able to offer no resistance to the armed band of Sallust; and when afterwards the volcano broke forth, they had huddled together, stunned and frightened, in the inmost recesses of the house. Even the tall Ethiopian had forsaken his post at the door; and Glaucus (who left Nydia without—the poor Nydia, jealous once more even in such an hour!) passed on through the vast hall without meeting one from whom to learn the chamber of Ione.

Even as he passed, however, the darkness that covered the heavens increased so rapidly, that it was with difficulty he could guide his steps. The flower-wreathed columns seemed to reel and tremble; and with every instant he heard the ashes fall craunchingly into the roofless peristyle. He ascended to the upper rooms—breathless he paced along, shouting out aloud the name of Ione; and at length he heard, at the end of a gallery, a voice—*her* voice, in wondering reply! To rush forward—to shatter the door—to seize Ione in his arms—to hurry from the mansion—seemed to him the work of an instant! Scarce had he gained the spot where Nydia was, than he heard steps advancing towards the house, and recognized the voice of Arbaces, who had returned to seek his wealth and Ione ere he fled from the doomed Pompeii. But so dense was already the reeking atmosphere, that the foes saw not each other, though so near,—save that, dimly in the gloom, Glaucus caught the moving outline of the snowy robes of the Egyptian.

They hastened onward—those three! Alas!—whither? They now saw not a step before them—the blackness became utter. They were encompassed with doubt and horror;—and the death he had escaped seemed to Glaucus only to have changed its form and augmented its victims.

CHAPTER VI.

CALENUS AND BURBO.—DIOMED AND CLODIUS.—THE GIRL OF THE AMPHITHEATRE AND JULIA.

THE sudden catastrophe which had, as it were, riven the very bonds of society, and left prisoner and jailer alike free, had soon rid Calenus of the guards to whose care the prætor had consigned him. And when the darkness and the crowd separated the priest from his attendants, he hastened with trembling steps towards the temple of his goddess. As he crept along, and ere the darkness was complete, he felt himself suddenly caught by the robe, and a voice muttered in his ear,—

"Hist!—Calenus!—an awful hour!"

"Ay! by my father's head! Who art thou?—thy face is dim, and thy voice is strange!"

"Not know thy Burbo?—fie!"

"Gods!—how the darkness gathers! Ho, ho!—by yon terrific mountain, what sudden blazes of lightning!*—How they dart and quiver! Hades is loosed on earth!"

"Tush!—thou believest not these things, Calenus! Now is the time to make our fortune!"

"Ha!"

"Listen! thy temple is full of gold and precious mummeries!—let us load ourselves with them, and then hasten to the sea and embark! None will ever ask an account of the doings of this day."

"Burbo, thou art right! Hush! and follow me into the temple. Who cares now—who sees now—whether thou art a priest or not? Follow, and we will share."

In the precincts of the temple were many priests gathered around the altars, praying, weeping, grovelling in the dust. Impostors in safety, they were not the less superstitious in danger! Calenus passed them, and entered the chamber yet to be seen in the south side of the court. Burbo followed him—the priest struck a light. Wine and viands strewed the table; the remains of a sacrificial feast.

"A man who has hungered forty-eight hours," muttered Calenus, "has an appetite even in such a time." He seized on the food, and devoured it greedily. Nothing could, perhaps, be more unnaturally horrid than the selfish baseness of these villains; for there is nothing more loathsome than the valor of avarice. Plunder and sacrilege while the pillars of the world tottered to and fro! What an increase to the terrors of nature can be made by the vices of man?

"Wilt thou never have done?" said Burbo, impatiently; "thy face purples and thine eyes start already."

"It is not every day one has such a right to be hungry. Oh, Jupiter! what sound is that?—the hissing of fiery water! What! does the cloud give rain as well as flame! Ha!—what! shrieks? And, Burbo, how silent all is now! Look forth!"

Amidst the other horrors, the mighty mountain now cast up columns of boiling water. Blent and kneaded with the half-burning ashes, the streams fell like seething mud over the streets in frequent intervals. And full, where the priests of Isis had now cowered around the altars, on which they had vainly sought to kindle fires and pour incense, one of the fiercest of those deadly torrents, mingled with immense fragments of scoria, had poured its rage. Over the bended forms of the priests it dashed: that cry had been of death—that silence had been of eternity! The ashes—the pitchy stream—sprinkled the altars, covered the pavement, and half concealed the quivering corpses of the priests!

"They are dead," said Burbo, terrified for the first time and hurrying back into the cell. "I thought not the danger was so near and fatal."

The two wretches stood staring at each other—you might have heard their hearts beat! Calenus, the less bold by nature, but the more griping, recovered first.

"We must to our task, and away!" he said, in a low whisper, frightened at his own voice. He stepped to the threshold, paused, crossed over the heated floor and his dead brethren to the sacred chapel, and called to Burbo to follow. But the gladiator quaked, and drew back.

"So much the better," thought Calenus;

* Volcanic lightnings. These phenomena were especially the characteristic of the long subsequent eruption of 1779, and their evidence is visible in the tokens of that more awful one, now so imperfectly described.

"the more will be *my* booty." Hastily he loaded himself with the more portable treasures of the temple; and thinking no more of his comrade, hurried from the sacred place. A sudden flash of lightning from the mount showed to Burbo, who stood motionless at the threshold, the flying and laden form of the priest. He took heart; he stepped forth to join him, when a tremendous shower of ashes fell right before his feet. The gladiator shrank back once more. Darkness closed him in. But the shower continued fast—fast; its heaps rose high and suffocatingly—deathly vapors steamed from them. The wretch gasped for breath—he sought in despair again to fly—the ashes had blocked up the threshold—he shrieked as his feet shrank from the boiling fluid. How could he escape?—he could not climb to the open space, nay, were he able, he could not brave its horrors. It were best to remain in the cell, protected, at least, from the fatal air. He sat down and clenched his teeth. By degrees, the atmosphere from without—stifling and venomous—crept into the chamber. He could endure it no longer. His eyes, glaring round, rested on a sacrificial axe, which some priest had left in the chamber: he seized it. With the desperate strength of his gigantic arm, he attempted to hew his way through the walls.

Meanwhile the streets were already thinned; the crowd had hastened to disperse itself under shelter; the ashes began to fill up the lower parts of the town; but, here and there, you heard the steps of fugitives craunching them warily, or saw their pale and haggard faces by the blue glare of the lightning, or the more unsteady glare of torches, by which they endeavored to steer their steps. But ever and anon, the boiling water, or the straggling ashes, mysterious and gusty winds, rising and dying in a breath, extinguished these wandering lights, and with them the last living hope of those who bore them.

In the street that leads to the gate of Herculaneum, Clodius now bent his perplexed and doubtful way. "If I can gain the open country," thought he, "doubtless there will be various vehicles beyond the gate, and Herculaneum is not far distant. Thank Mercury! I have little to lose, and that little is about me!"

"Holla!—help there—help!" cried a querulous and frightened voice. "I have fallen down—my torch is gone out—my slaves have deserted me. I am Diomed—the rich Diomed;—ten thousand sesterces to him who helps me!"

At that same moment Clodius felt himself caught by the feet. "Ill fortune to thee,—let me go, fool!" said the gambler.

"Oh, help me up!—give me thy hand!"

"There—rise!"

"Is this Clodius? I know the voice! Whither fliest thou?"

"Towards Herculaneum."

"Blessed be the gods! our way is the same, then, as far as the gate. Why not take refuge at my villa? Thou knowest the long range of subterranean cellars beneath the basement,—that shelter, what shower can penetrate?"

"You speak well," said Clodius, musingly. "And by storing the cellar with food, we can remain there even some days, should these wondrous storms endure so long."

"Oh, blessed be he who invented gates to a city!" cried Diomed. "See!—they have placed a light within yon arch; by that let us guide our steps."

The air was now still for a few minutes: the lamp from the gate streamed out far and clear: the fugitives hurried on—they gained the gate—they passed by the Roman sentry; the lightning flashed over his livid face and polished helmet, but his stern features were composed even in their awe! He remained erect and motionless at his post. That hour itself had not animated the machine of the ruthless majesty of Rome into the reasoning and self-acting man. There he stood, amidst the crashing elements: he had not received the permission to desert his station and escape.*

Diomed and his companion hurried on, when suddenly a female form rushed athwart their way. It was the girl whose ominous voice had been raised so often and so gladly in anticipation of "the merry show!"

"Oh, Diomed!" she cried, "shelter! shelter! See,"—pointing to an infant clasped to her breast—"see this little one!—it is

* The skeletons of more than one sentry were found at their posts.

mine!—the child of shame! I have never owned it till this hour. But *now* I remember I am a mother! I have plucked it from the cradle of its nurse: *she* had fled! Who could think of the babe in such an hour but she who bore it? Save it! save it!"

"Curses on thy shrill voice! Away, harlot!" muttered Clodius between his ground teeth.

"Nay, girl," said the more humane Diomed; "follow if thou wilt. This way—this way—to the vaults!"

They hurried on—they arrived at the house of Diomed—they laughed aloud as they crossed the threshold, for they deemed the danger over.

Diomed ordered his slaves to carry down into the subterranean gallery, before described, a profusion of food and oil for lights; and there Julia, Clodius, the mother and her babe, the greater part of the slaves, and some frightened visitors and clients of the neighborhood, sought their shelter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROGRESS OF THE DESTRUCTION.

THE cloud, which had scattered so deep a murkiness over the day, had now settled into a solid and impenetrable mass. It resembled less even the thickest gloom of a night in the open air than the close and blind darkness of some narrow room.* But in proportion as the blackness gathered, did the lightnings around Vesuvius increase in their vivid and scorching glare. Nor was their horrible beauty confined to the usual hues of fire; no rainbow ever rivalled their varying and prodigal dyes. Now brightly blue as the most azure depth of a southern sky—now of a livid and snakelike green, darting restlessly to and fro as the folds of an enormous serpent—now of a lurid and intolerable crimson, gushing forth through the columns of smoke, far and wide, and lighting up the whole city from arch to arch—then suddenly dying into a sickly paleness, like the ghost of their own life!

* Pliny.

In the pauses of the showers, you heard the rumbling of the earth beneath, and the groaning waves of the tortured sea; or, lower still, and audible but to the watch of intensest fear, the grinding and hissing murmur of the escaping gases through the chasms of the distant mountain. Sometimes the cloud appeared to break from its solid mass, and, by the lightning, to assume quaint and vast mimicries of human or of monster shapes, striding across the gloom, hurtling one upon the other, and vanishing swiftly into the turbulent abyss of shade; so that, to the eyes and fancies of the affrighted wanderers, the unsubstantial vapors were as the bodily forms of gigantic foes,—the agents of terror and of death.*

The ashes in many places were already knee deep; and the boiling showers which came from the steaming breath of the volcano forced their way into the houses, bearing with them a strong and suffocating vapor. In some places, immense fragments of rock, hurled upon the house roofs, bore down along the streets masses of confused ruin, which yet more and more, with every hour, obstructed the way; and, as the day advanced, the motion of the earth was more sensibly felt—the footing seemed to slide and creep—nor could chariot or litter be kept steady, even on the most level ground.

Sometimes, the huger stones, striking against each other as they fell, broke into countless fragments, emitting sparks of fire, which caught whatever was combustible within their reach; and along the plains beyond the city the darkness was now terribly relieved; for several houses, and even vineyards, had been set on flames; and at various intervals, the fires rose sullenly and fiercely against the solid gloom. To add to this partial relief of the darkness, the citizens had, here and there, in the more public places, such as the porticos of temples and the entrances to the forum, endeavored to place rows of torches; but these rarely continued long; the showers and the winds extinguished them, and the sudden darkness into which their sudden birth was converted had something in it doubly terrible and doubly impressing on the impotence of human hopes, the lesson of despair.

* Dion Cassius.

Frequently, by the momentary light of these torches, parties of fugitives encountered each other, some hurrying towards the sea, others flying from the sea back to the land; for the ocean had retreated rapidly from the shore—an utter darkness lay over it, and, upon its groaning and tossing waves, the storm of cinders and rock fell without the protection which the streets and roofs afforded to the land. Wild—haggard—ghastly with supernatural fears, these groups encountered each other, but without the leisure to speak, to consult, to advise; for the showers fell now frequently, though not continuously, extinguishing the lights, which showed to each band the death-like faces of the other, and hurrying all to seek refuge beneath the nearest shelter. The whole elements of civilization were broken up. Ever and anon, by the flickering lights, you saw the thief hastening by the most solemn authorities of the law, laden with, and fearfully chuckling over, the produce of his sudden gains. If, in the darkness, wife was separated from husband, or parent from child, vain was the hope of reunion. Each hurried blindly and confusedly on. Nothing in all the various and complicated machinery of social life was left save the primal law of self-preservation!

Through this awful scene did the Athenian wade his way, accompanied by Ione and the blind girl. Suddenly, a rush of hundreds, in their path to the sea, swept by them. Nydia was torn from the side of Glaucus, who, with Ione, was borne rapidly onward; and when the crowd (whose forms they saw not, so thick was the gloom) were gone, Nydia was still separated from their side. Glaucus shouted her name. No answer came. They retraced their steps—in vain: they could not discover her—it was evident that she had been swept along some opposite direction by the human current. Their friend, their preserver, was lost! And hitherto Nydia had been their guide. *Her blindness rendered the scene familiar to her alone.* Accustomed, through a perpetual night, to thread the windings of the city, she had led them unerringly towards the sea-shore, by which they had resolved to hazard an escape. Now, which way could they wend? all was rayless to them—a maze without a clue. Wearied, despondent, bewildered, they, however, passed along, the ashes falling upon their heads, the fragmentary stones dashing up in sparkles before their feet.

"Alas! alas!" murmured Ione, "I can go no farther; my steps sink among the scorching cinders. Fly, dearest!—beloved, fly! and leave me to my fate!"

"Hush, my betrothed! my bride! Death with thee is sweeter than life without thee! Yet, whither—oh! whither, can we direct ourselves through the gloom. Already it seems that we have made but a circle, and are in the very spot which we quitted an hour ago."

"O gods! yon rock—see, it hath riven the roof before us! It is death to move through the streets!"

"Blessed lightning! See, Ione—see! the portico of the temple of Fortune is before us. Let us creep beneath it; it will protect us from the showers."

He caught his beloved in his arms, and, with difficulty and labor, gained the temple. He bore her to the remoter and more sheltered part of the portico, and leaned over her, that he might shield her, with his own form, from the lightning and the showers! The beauty and the unselfishness of love could hallow even that dismal time!

"Who is there?" said the trembling and hollow voice of one who had preceded them in their place of refuge. "Yet, what matters?—the crush of the ruined world forbids to us friends or foes."

Ione turned at the sound of the voice, and, with a faint shriek, cowered again beneath the arms of Glaucus: and he, looking in the direction of the voice, beheld the cause of her alarm. Through the darkness glared forth two burning eyes—the lightning flashed and lingered athwart the temple—and Glaucus, with a shudder, perceived the lion to which he had been doomed couched beneath the pillars;—and, close beside it, unwitting of the vicinity, lay the giant form of him who had accosted them—the wounded gladiator, Niger.

That lightning had revealed to each other the form of beast and man; yet the instinct of both was quelled. Nay, the lion crept near and nearer to the gladiator, as for companionship; and the gladiator did not recede or tremble. The revolution of Nature had

dissolved her lighter terrors as well as her wonted ties.

While they were thus terribly protected, a group of men and women, bearing torches, passed by the temple. They were of the congregation of the Nazarenes; and a sublime and unearthly emotion had not, indeed, quelled their awe, but it had robbed awe of fear. They had long believed, according to the error of the early Christians, that the Last Day was at hand; they imagined now that the Day had come.

"Woe! woe!" cried, in a shrill and piercing voice, the elder at their head. "Behold! the Lord descendeth to judgment! He maketh fire come down from heaven in the sight of men! Woe! woe! ye strong and mighty! Woe to ye of the fasces and the purple! Woe to the idolater and the worshipper of the beast! Woe to ye who pour forth the blood of saints, and gloat over the death-pangs of the sons of God! Woe to the harlot of the sea!—woe! woe!"

And with a loud and deep chorus, the troop chanted forth along the wild horrors of the air,—"Woe to the harlot of the sea!—woe! woe!"

The Nazarenes paced slowly on, their torches still flickering in the storm, their voices still raised in menace and solemn warning, till, lost amid the windings in the streets, the darkness of the atmosphere and the silence of death again fell over the scene.

There was one of the frequent pauses in the showers, and Glaucus encouraged Ione once more to proceed. Just as they stood, hesitating, on the last step of the portico, an old man, with a bag in his right hand and leaning upon a youth, tottered by. The youth bore a torch. Glaucus recognized the two as father and son—miser and prodigal.

"Father," said the youth, "if you cannot move more swiftly, I must leave you, or we *both* perish!"

"Fly, boy, then, and leave thy sire!"

"But I cannot fly to starve; give me thy bag of gold!" And the youth snatched at it.

"Wretch! wouldst thou rob thy father?"

"Ay! who can tell the tale in this hour? Miser, perish!"

The boy struck the old man to the ground, plucked the bag from his relaxing hand, and fled onward with a shrill yell.

"Ye gods!" cried Glaucus: "are ye blind, then, even in the dark? Such crimes may well confound the guiltless with the guilty in one common ruin. Ione, on!—on!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES ENCOUNTERS GLAUCUS AND IONE.

ADVANCING, as men grope for escape in a dungeon, Ione and her lover continued their uncertain way. At the moments when the volcanic lightnings lingered over the streets, they were enabled, by that awful light, to steer and guide their progress: yet, little did the view it presented to them cheer or encourage their path. In parts, where the ashes law dry and uncommixed with the boiling torrents cast upward from the mountain at capricious intervals, the surface of the earth presented a leprous and ghastly white. In other places, cinder and rock lay matted in heaps, from beneath which emerged the half-hid limbs of some crushed and mangled fugitive. The groans of the dying were broken by wild shrieks of women's terror—now near, now distant—which, when heard in the utter darkness, were rendered doubly appalling by the crushing sense of helplessness and the uncertainty of the perils around; and clear and distinct through all were the mighty and various noises from the Fatal Mountain; its rushing winds; its whirling torrents; and, from time to time, the burst and roar of some more fiery and fierce explosion. And ever as the winds swept howling along the street, they bore sharp streams of burning dust, and such sickening and poisonous vapors, as took away, for the instant, breath and consciousness, followed by a rapid revulsion of the arrested blood, and a tingling sensation of agony trembling through every nerve and fibre of the frame.

"Oh, Glaucus! my beloved! my own!—take me to thy arms! One embrace! let me feel thy arms around me—and in that embrace let me die—I can no more!"

"For my sake, for my life—courage yet, sweet Ione—my life is linked with thine; and see—torches—this way! Lo! how they

brave the wind! Ha! they live through the storm—doubtless, fugitives to the sea! —we will join them."

As if to aid and reanimate the lovers, the winds and showers came to a sudden pause; the atmosphere was profoundly still—the mountain seemed at rest, gathering, perhaps, fresh fury for its next burst: the torch-bearers moved quickly on. "We are nearing the sea," said, in a calm voice, the person at their head. "Liberty and wealth to each slave who survives this day! Courage!—I tell you that the gods themselves have assured me of deliverance—On!"

Redly and steadily the torches flashed full on the eyes of Glaucus and Ione, who lay trembling and exhausted on his bosom. Several slaves were bearing, by the light, panniers and coffers, heavily laden; in front of them,—a drawn sword in his hand,—towered the lofty form of Arbaces.

"By my fathers!" cried the Egyptian, "Fate smiles upon me even through these horrors, and, amidst the dreadest aspects of woe and death, bodes me happiness and love. Away, Greek! I claim my ward, Ione!"

"Traitor and murderer!" cried Glaucus, glaring upon his foe, "Nemesis hath guided thee to my revenge!—a just sacrifice to the shades of Hades, that now seem loosed on earth. Approach—touch but the hand of Ione, and thy weapon shall be as a reed—I will tear thee limb from limb!"

Suddenly, as he spoke, the place became lighted with an intense and lurid glow. Bright and gigantic through the darkness, which closed around it like the walls of hell, the Mountain shone—a pile of fire! Its summit seemed riven in two; or rather above its surface there seemed to rise two monster-shapes, each confronting each, as Demons contending for a World. These were of one deep blood-red hue of fire, which lighted up the whole atmosphere far and wide; but *below*, the nether part of the mountain was still dark and shrouded,—save in three places, adown which flowed, serpentine and irregular,* rivers of the molten lava. Darkly red through the profound gloom of their banks, they flowed slowly on, as towards the devoted city. Over the broadest there seemed to spring a cragged and stupendous arch, from which, as from the jaws of hell, gushed the sources of the sudden Phlegethon. And through the stilled air was heard the rattling of the fragments of rock, hurtling one upon another as they were borne down the fiery cataracts—darkening, for one instant, the spot where they fell, and suffused, the next, in the burnished hues of the flood along which they floated!

The slaves shrieked aloud, and, cowering, hid their faces. The Egyptian himself stood transfixed to the spot, the glow lighting up his commanding features and jewelled robes. High behind him rose a tall column that supported the bronze statue of Augustus; and the imperial image seemed changed to a shape of fire!

With his left hand circled round the form of Ione—with his right arm raised in menace, and grasping the stilus which was to have been his weapon in the arena, and which he still fortunately bore about him, with his brow knit—his lips apart, the wrath and menace of human passions arrested, as by a charm, upon his features,—Glaucus fronted the Egyptian!

Arbaces turned his eyes from the Mountain—they rested on the form of Glaucus! He paused a moment: "Why," he muttered, "should I hesitate? Did not the stars foretell the only crisis of imminent peril to which I was subjected?—Is not that peril past?

"The soul," cried he aloud, "can brave the wreck of worlds and the wrath of imaginary gods! By that soul will I conquer to the last! Advance, slaves!—Athenian, resist me, and thy blood be on thine own head! Thus, then, I regain Ione!"

He advanced one step—it was his last on earth! The ground shook beneath him with a convulsion that cast all around upon its surface. A simultaneous crash resounded through the city, as down toppled many a roof and pillar!—the lightning, as if caught by the metal, lingered an instant on the Imperial Statue—then shivered bronze and column! Down fell the ruin, echoing along the street, and riving the solid pavement where it crashed!—The prophecy of the stars was fulfilled!

* See note (*a*) at the end.

The sound—the shock, stunned the Athenian for several moments. When he recovered, the light still illumined the scene—the earth still slid and trembled beneath! Ione lay senseless on the ground; but he saw her not yet—his eyes were fixed upon a ghastly face that seemed to emerge, without limbs or trunk, from the huge fragments of the shattered column—a face of unutterable pain, agony, and despair! The eyes shut and opened rapidly, as if sense were not yet fled; the lips quivered and grinned—then sudden stillness and darkness fell over the features, yet retaining that aspect of horror never to be forgotten!

So perished the wise Magician—the great Arbaces—the Hermes of the Burning Belt—the last of the royalty of Egypt!

CHAPTER IX.

THE DESPAIR OF THE LOVERS.—THE CONDITION OF THE MULTITUDE.

GLAUCUS turned in gratitude but in awe, caught Ione once more in his arms, and fled along the street, that was yet intensely luminous. But suddenly a duller shade fell over the air. Instinctively he turned to the mountain, and behold! one of the two gigantic crests, into which the summit had been divided, rocked and wavered to and fro; and then, with a sound, the mightiness of which no language can describe, it fell from its burning base, and rushed, an avalanche of fire, down the sides of the mountain! At the same instant gushed forth a volume of blackest smoke—rolling on, over air, sea, and earth.

Another—and another—and another shower of ashes, far more profuse than before, scattered fresh desolation along the streets. Darkness once more wrapped them as a veil; and Glaucus, his bold heart at last quelled and despairing, sank beneath the cover of an arch, and, clasping Ione to his heart—a bride on that couch of ruin—resigned himself to die.

Meanwhile Nydia, when separated by the throng from Glaucus and Ione, had in vain endeavored to regain them. In vain she raised that plaintive cry so peculiar to the blind; it was lost amidst a thousand shrieks of more selfish terror. Again and again she returned to the spot where they had been divided—to find her companions gone, to seize every fugitive—to inquire of Glaucus—to be dashed aside in the impatience of distraction. Who in that hour spared one thought to his neighbor? Perhaps in scenes of universal horror, nothing is more horrid than the unnatural selfishness they engender.

At length it occurred to Nydia, that as it had been resolved to seek the sea-shore for escape, her most probable chance of rejoining her companions would be to persevere in that direction. Guiding her steps, then, by the staff which she always carried, she continued, with incredible dexterity, to avoid the masses of ruin that encumbered the path—to thread the streets—and unerringly (so blessed now was that accustomed darkness, so afflicting in ordinary life!) to take the nearest direction to the sea-side.

Poor girl! her courage was beautiful to behold!—and Fate seemed to favor one so helpless! The boiling torrents touched her not, save by the general rain which accompanied them: the huge fragments of scoria shivered the pavement before and beside her, but spared that frail form: and when the lesser ashes fell over her, she shook them away with a slight tremor,* and dauntlessly resumed her course.

Weak, exposed, yet fearless, supported but by one wish, she was a very emblem of Psyche in her wanderings; of Hope, walking through the Valley of the Shadow; of the Soul itself—lone but undaunted, amidst the dangers and the snares of life!

Her path was, however, constantly impeded by the crowds that now groped amidst the gloom, now fled in the temporary glare of the lightnings across the scene; and, at length, a group of torch-bearers rushing full against her, she was thrown down with some violence.

"What!" said the voice of one of the party, "is this the brave blind girl? By Bacchus, she must not be left here to die! Up! my Thessalian! So—so. Are you

* "A heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which every now and then we were obliged to shake off, otherwise we should have been crushed and buried in the heap."—PLINY.

hurt? That's well! Come along with us! we are for the shore!"

"O Sallust! it is thy voice! The gods be thanked! Glaucus! Glaucus! have ye seen him?"

"Not I. He is doubtless out of the city by this time. The gods who saved him from the lion will save him from the burning mountain."

As the kindly epicure thus encouraged Nydia, he drew her along with him towards the sea, heeding not her passionate entreaties that he would linger yet awhile to search for Glaucus; and still, in the accent of despair, she continued to shriek out that beloved name, which, amidst all the roar of the convulsed elements, kept alive a music at her heart.

The sudden illumination, the bursts of the floods of lava, and the earthquake, which we have already described, chanced when Sallust and his party had just gained the direct path leading from the city to the port; and here they were arrested by an immense crowd, more than half the population of the city. They spread along the fields without the walls, thousands upon thousands, uncertain whither to fly. The sea had retired far from the shore; and they who had fled to it had been so terrified by the agitation and preternatural shrinking of the element, the gasping forms of the uncouth sea things which the waves had left upon the sand, and by the sound of the huge stones cast from the mountain into the deep, that they had returned again to the land, as presenting the less frightful aspect of the two. Thus the two streams of human beings, the one seaward, the other *from* the sea, had met together, feeling a sad comfort in numbers; arrested in despair and doubt.

"The world is to be destroyed by fire," said an old man in long loose robes, a philosopher of the Stoic school: "Stoic and Epicurean wisdom have alike agreed in this prediction; and the hour is come!"

"Yea; the hour is come!" cried a loud voice, solemn but not fearful.

Those around turned in dismay. The voice came from above them. It was the voice of Olinthus, who, surrounded by his Christian friends, stood upon an abrupt eminence on which the old Greek colonists had raised a temple to Apollo, now time-worn, and half in ruin.

As he spoke, there came that sudden illumination which had heralded the death of Arbaces, and glowing over that mighty multitude, awed, crouching, breathless—never on earth had the faces of men seemed so haggard!—never had meeting of mortal beings been so stamped with the horror and sublimity of dread!—never, till the last trumpet sounds, shall such meeting be seen again! And above rose the form of Olinthus, with outstretched arm and prophet brow, girt with the living fires. And the crowd knew the face of him they had doomed to the fangs of the beast—*then* their victim, *now* their warner; and through the stillness again came his ominous voice—

"The hour is come!"

The Christians repeated the cry. It was caught up—it was echoed from side to side—woman and man—childhood and old age—repeated, not aloud, but in a smothered and dreary murmur—

"THE HOUR IS COME!"

At that moment, a wild yell burst through the air;—and, thinking only of escape, whither it knew not, the terrible tiger of the desert leaped amongst the throng, and hurried through its parted streams. And so came the earthquake,—and so darkness once more fell over the earth!

And now new fugitives arrived. Grasping the treasures no longer destined for their lord, the slaves of Arbaces joined the throng. One only of all their torches yet flickered on. It was borne by Sosia; and its light falling on the face of Nydia, he recognized the Thessalian.

"What avails thy liberty now, blind girl?" said the slave.

"Who art thou? canst thou tell me of Glaucus?"

"Ay; I saw him but a few minutes since."

"Blessed be thy head! where?"

"Couched beneath the arch of the forum—dead or dying!—gone to rejoin Arbaces, who is no more!"

Nydia uttered not a word; she slid from the side of Sallust; silently she glided through those behind her, and retraced her steps to the city. She gained the forum—

the arch; she stooped down—she felt around—she called on the name of Glaucus.

A weak voice answered—"Who calls on me? Is it the voice of the Shades? Lo! I am prepared!"

"Arise! follow me! Take my hand! Glaucus, thou shalt be saved!"

In wonder and sudden hope, Glaucus arose—"Nydia still? Ah! thou, then, art safe!"

The tender joy of his voice pierced the heart of the poor Thessalian, and she blessed him for his thought of her.

Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus followed his guide. With admirable discretion, she avoided the path which led to the crowd she had just quitted, and, by another route, sought the shore.

After many pauses and incredible perseverance, they gained the sea, and joined a group, who, bolder than the rest, resolved to hazard any peril rather than continue in such a scene. In darkness they put forth to sea; but, as they cleared the land and caught new aspects of the mountain, its channels of molten fire threw a partial redness over the waves.

Utterly exhausted and worn out, Ione slept on the breast of Glaucus, and Nydia lay at his feet. Meanwhile the showers of dust and ashes, still borne aloft, fell into the wave, and scattered their snows over the deck. Far and wide, borne by the winds, those showers descended upon the remotest climes, startling even the swarthy Africa; and whirled along the antique soil of Syria and of Egypt.*

CHAPTER X.

THE NEXT MORNING.—THE FATE OF NYDIA.

And meekly, softly, beautifully, dawned at last the light over the trembling deep!—the winds were sinking into rest—the foam died from the glowing azure of that delicious sea. Around the east, thin mists caught gradually the rosy hues that heralded the morning; Light was about to resume her reign. Yet, still, dark and massive in the distance, lay the broken fragments of the destroying cloud, from which red streaks, burning dimlier and more dim, betrayed the yet rolling fires of the mountain of the "Scorched Fields." The white walls and gleaming columns that had adorned the lovely coast were no more. Sullen and dull were the shores so lately crested by the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The darlings of the Deep were snatched from her embrace! Century after century shall the mighty Mother stretch forth her azure arms, and know them not—moaning round the sepulchres of the Lost!

There was no *shout* from the mariners at the dawning light—it had come too gradually, and they were too wearied for such sudden bursts of joy—but there was a low, deep *murmur* of thankfulness amidst those watchers of the long night. They looked at each other and smiled—they took heart—they felt once more that there was a world around, and a God above them! And in the feeling that the worst was past, the overwearied ones turned round, and fell placidly to sleep. In the growing light of the skies there came the silence which night had wanted; and the bark drifted calmly onward to its port. A few other vessels, bearing similar fugitives, might be seen in the expanse, apparently motionless, yet gliding also on. There was a sense of security, of companionship, and of hope, in the sight of their slender masts and white sails. What beloved friends, lost and missed in the gloom, might they not bear to safety and to shelter!

In the silence of the general sleep, Nydia rose gently. She bent over the face of Glaucus—she inhaled the deep breath of his heavy slumber,—timidly and sadly she kissed his brow—his lips; she felt for his hand—it was locked in that of Ione; she sighed deeply, and her face darkened. Again she kissed his brow, and with her hair wiped from it the damps of night. "May the gods bless you, Athenian!" she murmured; "may you be happy with your beloved one!—may you sometimes remember Nydia! Alas! she is of no further use on earth!"

With these words she turned away. Slowly she crept along by the *fori*, or platforms, to the farther side of the vessel, and, paus-

* Dion Cassius.

ing, bent low over the deep; the cool spray dashed upward on her feverish brow. "It is the kiss of death," she said—"it is welcome." The balmy air played through her waving tresses—she put them from her face, and raised those eyes—so tender, though so lightless—to the sky, whose soft face she had never seen!

"No, no!" she said, half aloud, and in a musing and thoughtful tone, "I cannot endure it; this jealous, exacting love—it shatters my whole soul in madness! I might harm him again—wretch that I was! I have saved him—twice saved him—happy, happy thought!—why not *die* happy?—it is the last glad thought I can ever know. Oh! sacred Sea! I hear thy voice invitingly—it hath a freshening and joyous call. They say that in thy embrace is dishonor—that thy victims cross not the fatal Styx—be it so!—I would not meet him in the Shades, for I should meet him still with *her!* Rest—rest—rest!—there is no other Elysium for a heart like mine!"

A sailor, half dozing on the deck, heard a slight splash on the waters. Drowsily he looked up, and behind, as the vessel merrily bounded on, he fancied he saw something white above the waves; but it vanished in an instant. He turned round again, and dreamed of his home and children.

When the lovers awoke, their first thought was of each other—their next of Nydia! She was not to be found—none had seen her since the night. Every crevice of the vessel was searched—there was no trace of her. Mysterious from first to last, the blind Thessalian had vanished for ever from the living world! They guessed her fate in silence: and Glaucus and Ione, while they drew nearer to each other (feeling each other the world itself) forgot their deliverance, and wept as for a departed sister.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

WHEREIN ALL THINGS CEASE.

Letter from Glaucus to Sallust, ten years after the destruction of Pompeii.

"*Athens.*

"GLAUCUS to his beloved Sallust—greeting and health!—You request me to visit you at Rome—no, Sallust, come rather to me at Athens! I have forsworn the Imperial City, its mighty tumult and hollow joys. In my own land henceforth I dwell for ever. The ghost of our departed greatness is dearer to me than the gaudy life of your loud prosperity. There is a charm to me which no other spot can supply, in the porticos hallowed still by holy and venerable shades. In the olive groves of Ilissus I still hear the voice of poetry—on the heights of Phyle, the clouds of twilight seem yet the shrouds of departed freedom—the heralds—the heralds—of the morrow that shall come! You smile at my enthusiasm, Sallust!—better be hopeful in chains than resigned to their glitter. You tell me you are sure that I cannot enjoy life in these melancholy haunts of a fallen majesty. You dwell with rapture on the Roman splendors, and the luxuries of the imperial court. My Sallust—'*non sum qualis eram*'—I am not what I was! The events of my life have sobered the bounding blood of my youth. My health has never quite recovered its wonted elasticity ere it felt the pangs of disease, and languished in the damps of a criminal's dungeon. My mind has never shaken off the dark shadow of the Last Day of Pompeii—the horror and the desolation of that awful ruin!—Our beloved, our remembered Nydia! I have reared a tomb to her shade, and I see it every day from the window of my study. It keeps alive in me a tender recollection—a not unpleasing sadness—which are but a fitting homage to her fidelity, and the mysteriousness of her early death. Ione gathers the flowers, but my own hand wreathes them daily around the tomb. She was worthy of a tomb in Athens!

"You speak of the growing sect of the Christians in Rome. Sallust, to you I may confide my secret; I have pondered much over that faith—I have adopted it. After the destruction of Pompeii, I met once more with Olinthus—saved, alas; only for a day, and falling afterwards a martyr to the indomitable energy of his zeal. In my preservation from the lion and the earthquake he taught me to behold the hand of the unknown God! I listened—believed—adored! My own, my more than ever beloved Ione, has

also embraced the creed !—a creed, Sallust, which shedding light over this world, gathers its concentrated glory, like a sunset, over the next ! We know that we are united in the soul, as in the flesh, for ever and for ever ! Ages may roll on, our very dust be dissolved, the earth shrivelled like a scroll; but round and round the circle of eternity rolls the wheel of life—imperishable—unceasing ! And as the earth from the sun, so immortality drinks happiness from virtue, which is the smile upon the face of God ! Visit me, then, Sallust; bring with you the learned scrolls of Epicurus, Pythagoras, Diogenes; arm yourself for defeat; and let us, amidst the groves of Academus, dispute, under a surer guide than any granted to our fathers, on the mighty problem of the true ends of life and the nature of the soul.

"Ione—at that name my heart yet beats ! —Ione is by my side as I write; I lift my eyes, and meet her smile. The sunlight quivers over Hymettus: and along my garden I hear the hum of the summer bees. Am I happy, ask you ? Oh, what can Rome give me equal to what I possess at Athens ! Here, every thing awakens the soul and inspires the affections—the trees, the waters, the hills, the skies, are those of Athens !—fair, though mourning—mother of the Poetry and the Wisdom of the World. In my hall I see the marble faces of my ancestors. In the Ceramicus, I survey their tombs ! In the streets, I behold the hand of Phidias and the soul of Pericles. Harmodius, Aristogiton—*they* are every where—but in our hearts !—in *mine*, at least, they shall not perish ! If any thing can make me forget that I am Athenian and not free, it is partly the soothing—the love—watchful, vivid, sleepless—of Ione:—a love that has taken a new sentiment in our new creed *—a love which none of our poets, beautiful though they be, had shadowed forth in description; for, mingled with religion, it partakes of religion; it is blended with pure and unworldly thoughts; it is that which we may hope to carry through eternity, and keep, therefore, white and unsullied, that we may not blush to confess it to our God ! This is the true type of the dark fable of our Grecian Eros and Psyche—it is, in truth, the soul asleep in the arms of love. And if this, our love, support me partly against the fever of the desire for freedom, my religion supports me more; for whenever I would grasp the sword, and sound the shell, and rush to a new Marathon (but Marathon without victory), I feel my despair at the chilling thought of my country's impotence—the crushing weight of the Roman yoke, comforted, at least, by the thought that earth is but the beginning of life—that the glory of a few years matters little in the vast space of eternity—that there is no perfect freedom till the chains of clay fall from the soul, and all space, all time, become its heritage and domain. Yet, Sallust, some mixture of the soft Greek blood still mingles with my faith. I can share not the zeal of those who see crime and eternal wrath in men who cannot believe as they. I shudder not at the creed of others. I dare not *curse* them—I pray the Great Father to *convert*. This lukewarmness exposes me to some suspicion amongst the Christians: but I forgive it; and, not offending openly the prejudices of the crowd, I am thus enabled to protect my brethren from the danger of the law, and the consequences of their own zeal. If moderation seem to me the natural creature of benevolence, it gives, also, the greatest scope to beneficence.

"Such, then, O Sallust ! is my life—such my opinions. In this manner I greet existence and await death. And thou, glad-hearted and kindly pupil of Epicurus, thou —But come hither, and see what enjoyments, what hopes are ours,—and not the splendor of imperial banquets, nor the shouts of the crowded circus, nor the noisy forum, nor the glittering theatre, nor the luxuriant gardens, nor the voluptuous baths of Rome,—shall seem to thee to constitute a life of more vivid and uninterrupted happiness than that which thou so unreasonably pitiest as the career of Glaucus the Athenian !—Farewell !"

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Nearly Seventeen Centuries had rolled away when the City of Pompeii was disinterred from its silent tomb,* all vivid with undimmed hues; its walls fresh as if painted

* See note (*b*) at the end.

* Destroyed A.D. 79; first discovered A.D. 1750.

yesterday,—not a hue faded on the rich mosaic of its floors,—in its forum the half-finished columns as left by the workman's hand,—in its gardens the sacrificial tripod,—in its halls the chest of treasure,—in its baths the strigil,—in its theatres the counter of admission,—in its saloons the furniture and the lamp,—in its triclinia the fragments of the last feast,—in its cubicula the perfumes and the rouge of faded beauty,—and every where, the bones and skeletons of those * who once moved the springs of that minute yet gorgeous machine of luxury and of life!

In the house of Diomed, in the subterranean vaults, twenty skeletons (one of a babe) were discovered in one spot by the door, covered by a fine ashen dust that had evidently been wafted slowly through the apertures, until it had filled the whole space. There were jewels and coins, candelabra for unavailing light, and wine hardened in the amphoræ for a prolongation of agonized life. The sand, consolidated by damps, had taken the forms of the skeletons as in a cast; and the traveller may yet see the impression of a female neck and bosom of young and round proportions—the trace of the fated Julia! It seems to the inquirer as if the air had been gradually changed into a sulphurous vapor; the inmates of the vaults had rushed to the door, to find it closed and blocked up by the scoria without, and, in their attempts to force it, had been suffocated with the atmosphere.

In the garden was found a skeleton with a key by its bony hand, and near it a bag of coins. This is believed to have been the master of the house—the unfortunate Diomed, who had probably sought to escape by the garden, and been destroyed either by the vapors or some fragment of stone. Beside some silver vases lay another skeleton, probably of a slave.

The houses of Sallust and of Pansa, the temple of Isis, with the juggling concealments behind the statues—the lurking-place of its holy oracles,—are now bared to the gaze of the curious. In one of the chambers of that temple was found a huge skeleton with an axe beside it: two walls had been pierced by the axe—the victim could penetrate no farther. In the midst of the city was found another skeleton, by the side of which was a heap of coins, and many of the mystic ornaments of the fane of Isis. Death had fallen upon him in his avarice, and Calenus perished simultaneously with Burbo! As the excavators cleared on through the mass of ruin, they found the skeleton of a man literally severed in two by a prostrate column; the skull was of so striking a conformation, so boldly marked in its intellectual, as well as its worse physical developments, that it has excited the constant speculation of every itinerant believer in the theories of Spurzheim who has gazed upon that ruined palace of the mind. Still, after the lapse of ages, the traveller may survey that airy hall within whose cunning galleries and elaborate chambers once thought, reasoned, dreamed, and sinned, the soul of Arbaces the Egyptian!

Viewing the various witnesses of a social system which has passed from the world for ever—a stranger from that remote and barbarian Isle which the imperial Roman shivered when he named, paused amidst the delights of the soft Campania and composed this history!

* See note (*c*) at the end.

END OF "THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII."

HAROLD

THE LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO THE

RIGHT HON. C. T. D'EYNCOURT, M.P.

I DEDICATE to you, my dear friend, a work, principally composed under your hospitable roof; and to the materials of which your library, rich in the authorities I most needed, largely contributed.

The idea of founding an historical romance on an event so important and so national as the Norman Invasion, I had long entertained, and the chronicles of that time had long been familiar to me. But it is an old habit of mine, to linger over the plan and subject of a work, for years, perhaps, before the work has, in truth, advanced a sentence; "busying myself," as old Burton saith, "with this playing labor—*otiosâque diligentiâ ut vitarem torporem feriandi.*"

The main consideration which long withheld me from the task, was in my sense of the unfamiliarity of the ordinary reader with the characters, events, and, so to speak, with the very physiognomy of a period *ante Agamemnona;* before the brilliant age of matured chivalry, which has given to song and romance the deeds of the later knighthood, and the glorious frenzy of the Crusades. The Norman Conquest was our Trojan War; an epoch beyond which our learning seldom induces our imagination to ascend.

In venturing on ground so new to fiction, I saw before me the option of apparent pedantry in the obtrusion of such research as might carry the reader along with the Author, fairly and truly into the real records of the time; or of throwing aside pretensions to accuracy altogether;—and so rest contented to turn history into flagrant romance, rather than pursue my own conception of extracting its natural romance from the actual history. Finally, not without some encouragement from you, (whereof take your due share of blame!) I decided to hazard the attempt, and to adopt that mode of treatment which, if making larger demand on the attention of the reader, seemed the more complimentary to his judgment.

The age itself, once duly examined, is full of those elements which should awaken interest, and appeal to the imagination. Not untruly has Sismondi said, that "the Eleventh Century has a right to be considered a great age. It was a period of life and of creation; all that there was of noble, heroic, and vigorous in the Middle Ages commenced at that epoch." * But to us Englishmen in especial, besides the more animated interest in that spirit of adventure, enterprise, and improvement, of which the Norman chivalry was the noblest type, there is an interest more touching and deep in those last glimpses of the old Saxon monarchy, which open upon us in the mournful pages of our chroniclers.

I have sought in this work, less to portray mere manners, which modern researches have rendered familiar to ordinary students in our history, than to bring forward the great characters, so carelessly dismissed in the long and loose record of centuries; to show more clearly the motives and policy of the agents in an event the most memorable in Europe; and to convey a definite, if gen-

* Sismondi's History of France, vol. iv. p. 484.

HAROLD.

eral, notion of the human beings, whose brains schemed, and whose hearts beat, in that realm of shadows which lies behind the Norman Conquest;

"Spes hominum cæcos, morbos, votumque, labores,
Et passim toto volitantes æthere curas." *

I have thus been faithful to the leading historical incidents in the grand tragedy of Harold, and as careful as contradictory evidences will permit, both as to accuracy in the delineation of character, and correctness in that chronological chain of dates without which there can be no historical philosophy; that is, no tangible link between the cause and the effect. The fictitious part of my narrative is, as in "Rienzi," and the "Last of the Barons," confined chiefly to the private life, with its domain of incident and passion, which is the legitimate *appanage* of novelist or poet. The love story of Harold and Edith is told differently from the well-known legend, which implies a less pure connection. But the whole legend respecting the *Edeva faira* (Edith the fair) whose name meets us in the "Domesday" roll, rests upon very slight authority considering its popular acceptance; † and the reasons for my alterations will be sufficiently obvious in a work intended not only for general perusal, but which on many accounts, I hope, may be entrusted fearlessly to the young; while those alterations are in strict accordance with the spirit of the time, and tend to illustrate one of its most marked peculiarities.

More apology is perhaps due for the liberal use to which I have applied the superstitions of the age. But with the age itself those superstitions are so interwoven—they meet us so constantly, whether in the pages of our own chroniclers, or the records of the kindred Scandinavians—they are so intruded into the very laws, so blended with the very life, of our Saxon forefathers, that without employing them, in somewhat of the same credulous spirit with which they were originally conceived, no vivid impression of the People they influenced can be conveyed. Not without truth has an Italian writer remarked, "that he who would depict philosophically an unphilosophical age, should remember that, to be familiar with children, one must sometimes think and feel as a child."

Yet it has not been my main endeavor to make these ghostly agencies conducive to the ordinary poetical purposes of terror, and if that effect be at all created by them, it will be, I apprehend, rather subsidiary to the more historical sources of interest than, in itself, a leading or popular characteristic of the work. My object, indeed, in the introduction of the Danish Vala especially, has been perhaps as much addressed to the reason as to the fancy, in showing what large, if dim, remains of the ancient "heathenesse" still kept their ground on the Saxon soil, contending with and contrasting the monkish superstitions, by which they were ultimately replaced. Hilda is not in history; but without the romantic impersonation of that which Hilda represents, the history of the time would be imperfectly understood.

In the character of Harold—while I have carefully examined and weighed the scanty evidences of its distinguishing attributes which are yet preserved to us—and, in spite of no unnatural partiality, have not concealed what appear to me its deficiencies, and still less the great error of the life it illustrates,—I have attempted, somewhat and slightly, to shadow out the ideal of the pure Saxon character, such as it was then, with its large qualities undeveloped, but marked already by patient endurance, love of justice, and freedom—the manly sense of duty rather than the chivalric sentiment of honor—and that indestructible element of practical purpose and courageous will, which, defying all conquest, and steadfast in all peril, was ordained to achieve so vast an influence over the destinies of the world.

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* "Men's blinded hopes, diseases, toil, and prayer,
And winged troubles peopling daily air."

† Merely upon the obscure MS. of the Waltham Monastery; yet, such is the ignorance of popular criticism, that I have been as much attacked for the licence I have taken with the *legendary* connection between Harold and Edith, as if that connection were a proven and authenticated fact! Again, the pure attachment to which, in the romance, the loves of Edith and Harold are confined, has been alleged to be a sort of moral anachronism,—a sentiment wholly modern; whereas, on the contrary, an attachment so pure was infinitely more common in that day than in this, and made one of the most striking characteristics of the eleventh century; indeed of all the earlier ages in the Christian era, most subjected to monastic influences.

To the Norman Duke, I believe, I have been as lenient as justice will permit, though it is as impossible to deny his craft as to dispute his genius; and so far as the scope of my work would allow, I trust that I have indicated fairly the grand characteristics of his countrymen, more truly chivalric than their lord. It has happened, unfortunately for that illustrious race of men, that they have seemed to us, in England, represented by the Anglo-Norman kings. The fierce and plotting William, the vain and worthless Rufus, the cold-blooded and relentless Henry, are no adequate representatives of the far nobler Norman vavasours, whom even the English Chronicler admits to have been "kind masters," and to whom, in spite of their kings, the after liberties of England were so largely indebted. But this work closes on the Field of Hastings; and in that noble struggle for national independence, the sympathies of every true son of the land, even if tracing his lineage back to the Norman victor, must be on the side of the patriot Harold.

In the notes, which I have thought necessary aids to the better comprehension of these volumes, my only wish has been to convey to the general reader such illustrative information as may familiarize him more easily with the subject-matter of the book, or refresh his memory on incidental details not without a national interest. In the mere references to authorities I do not pretend to arrogate to a fiction the proper character of a history; the references are chiefly used either where wishing pointedly to distinguish from invention what was borrowed from a chronicle, or, when differing from some popular historian to whom the reader might be likely to refer, it seemed well to state the authority upon which the difference was founded.*

In fact, my main object has been one that compelled me to admit graver matter than is common in romance, but which I would fain hope may be saved from the charge of dulness by some national sympathy between author and reader; my object is attained, and attained only, if in closing the last page of this work, the reader shall find, that in spite of the fictitious materials admitted, he has formed a clearer and more intimate acquaintance with a time, heroic though remote, and characters which ought to have a household interest to Englishmen, than the succinct accounts of the mere historian could possibly afford him.

Thus, my dear D'Eyncourt, under cover of an address to yourself, have I made to the Public those explanations which authors in general (and I not the least so), are often over-anxious to render.

This task done, my thoughts naturally fly back to the associations I connected with your name when I placed it at the head of this epistle. Again I seem to find myself under your friendly roof; again to greet my provident host entering that gothic chamber in which I had been permitted to establish my unsocial study, heralding the advent of majestic folios, and heaping libraries round the unworthy work. Again, pausing from my labor, I look through that castle casement, and beyond that feudal moat, over the broad landscapes, which, if I err not, took their name from the proud brother of the Conqueror himself: or when, in those winter nights, the grim old tapestry waved in the dim recesses, I hear again the Saxon thegn winding his horn at the turret door, and demanding admittance to the halls from which the prelate of Bayeux had so unrighteously expelled him *—what marvel, that I lived in the times of which I wrote, Saxon with the Saxon, Norman with the Norman—that I entered into no gossip less venerable than that current at the Court of the Confessor, or startled my fellow-guests (when I deigned to meet them) with the last news which Harold's spies had brought over from the Camp at St. Valery? With all those folios, giants of the gone world, rising round me daily, more and more, higher and higher—Ossa upon Pelion—on chair and table, hearth and floor; invasive as Normans, indomitable as Saxons, and tall as the tallest Danes (ruthless host, I behold them still!)—with all those disburied spectres rampant in the chamber, all the armor rusting in thy galler-

* Notes less immediately necessary to the context, or too long, not to interfere with the current of the narrative, are thrown to the end of the work.

* There is a legend attached to my friend's house, that on certain nights in the year, Eric the Saxon winds his horn at the door, and, *in forma spectri*, serves his notice of ejectment.

ies, all those mutilated statues of early English kings (including St. Edward himself) niched into thy gray, ivied walls—say in thy conscience, O host, (if indeed that conscience be not wholly callous !) shall I ever return to the nineteenth century again ?

But far beyond these recent associations of a single winter (for which heaven assoil thee !) goes the memory of a friendship of many winters, and proof to the storms of all. Often have I come for advice to your wisdom, and sympathy to your heart, bearing back with me, in all such seasons, new increase to that pleasurable gratitude which is, perhaps, the rarest, nor the least happy sentiment, that experience leaves to man. Some differences, it may be,—whether on those public questions which we see, every day, alienating friendships that should have been beyond the reach of laws and kings;—or on the more scholastic controversies which as keenly interest the minds of educated men, —may at times deny to us the *idem velle, atque idem nolle;* but the *firma amicitia* needs not those common links: the sunshine does not leave the wave for the slight ripple which the casual stone brings a moment to the surface.

Accept, in this dedication of a work which has lain so long on my mind, and been endeared to me from many causes, the token of an affection for you and yours, strong as the ties of kindred, and lasting as the belief in truth.

E. B. L.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE author of an able and learned article on MABILLON,* in the Edinburgh Review, has accurately described my aim in this work; although, with that generous courtesy which characterizes the true scholar, in referring to the labors of a contemporary, he has overrated my success. It was indeed my aim "to solve the problem how to produce the greatest amount of dramatic effect at the least expense of historical truth"—I borrow the words of the Reviewer, since none other could so tersely express my design, or so clearly account for the leading characteristics in its conduct and completion.

There are two ways of employing the materials of History in the service of Romance: the one consists in lending to ideal personages, and to an imaginary fable, the additional interest to be derived from historical groupings: the other, in extracting the main interest of romantic narrative from History itself. Those who adopt the former mode are at liberty to exclude all that does not contribute to theatrical effect or picturesque composition; their fidelity to the period they select is towards the manners and costume, not towards the precise order of events, the moral causes from which the events proceeded, and the physical agencies by which they were influenced and controlled. The plan thus adopted is unquestionably the more popular and attractive, and, being favored by the most illustrious writers of historical romance, there is presumptive reason for supposing it to be also that which is the more agreeable to the art of fiction.

But he who wishes to avoid the ground pre-occupied by others, and claim in the world of literature some spot, however humble, which he may "plough with his own heifer," will seek to establish himself not where the land is the most fertile, but where it is the least enclosed. So, when I first turned my attention to Historical Romance, my main aim was to avoid as much as possible those fairer portions of the soil that had been appropriated by the first discoverers. The great author of Ivanhoe, and those amongst whom, abroad and at home, his mantle was divided, had employed History to aid Romance; I contented myself with the humbler task to employ Romance in the aid of History,—to extract from authentic but neglected chronicles, and the unfrequented storehouse of Archæology, the incidents and details that enliven the dry narrative of facts to which the general historian is confined,—construct my plot from the actual events themselves, and place the staple of such interest as I could create in reciting the struggles, and delineating the characters, of those who had

* The "Edinburgh Review," No. CLXXIX. January, 1849, Art. I. "Correspondance inédite, de Mabillon et de Montfaucon, avec l'Italie." Par M. Valéry. Paris, 1848.

been the living actors in the real drama. For the main materials of the three Historical Romances I have composed, I consulted the original authorities of the time with a care as scrupulous, as if intending to write, not a fiction but a history. And having formed the best judgment I could of the events and characters of the age, I adhered faithfully to what, as an Historian, I should have held to be the true course and true causes of the great political events, and the essential attributes of the principal agents. Solely in that inward life which, not only as apart from the more public and historical, but which, as almost wholly unknown, becomes the fair domain of the poet, did I claim the legitimate privileges of fiction, and even here I employed the agency of the passions only so far as they served to illustrate what I believed to be the genuine natures of the beings who had actually lived, and to restore the warmth of the human heart to the images recalled from the grave.

Thus, even had I the gifts of my most illustrious predecessors, I should be precluded the use of many of the more brilliant. I shut myself out from the wider scope permitted to their fancy, and denied myself the license to choose or select materials, alter dates, vary causes and effects according to the convenience of that more imperial fiction which invents the Probable where it discards the Real. The mode I have adopted has perhaps only this merit, that it is my own—mine by discovery and mine by labor. And if I can raise not the spirits that obeyed the great master of romance, nor gain the key to the fairyland that opened to his spell,—at least I have not rifled the tomb of the wizard to steal my art from the book that lies clasped on his breast.

In treating of an age with which the general reader is so unfamiliar as that preceding the Norman Conquest, it is impossible to avoid (especially in the earlier portions of my tale), those explanations of the very character of the time which would have been unnecessary if I had only sought in History the picturesque accompaniments to Romance. I have to do more than present an amusing picture of national manners—detail the dress, and describe the banquet. According to the plan I adopt, I have to make the reader acquainted with the imperfect fusion of races in Saxon England, familiarize him with the contests of parties and the ambition of chiefs, show him the strength and the weakness of a kindly but ignorant church; of a brave but turbulent aristocracy; of a people partially free, and naturally energetic, but disunited by successive immigrations, and having lost much of the proud jealousies of national liberty by submission to the preceding conquests of the Dane; acquiescent in the sway of foreign kings, and with that bulwark against invasion which an hereditary order of aristocracy usually erects, loosened to its very foundations by the copious admixture of foreign nobles. I have to present to the reader, here, the imbecile priestcraft of the illiterate monk, there, the dark superstition that still consulted the deities of the North by runes on the elm bark and adjurations of the dead. And in contrast to these pictures of a decrepit monarchy and a fated race, I have to bring forcibly before the reader the vigorous attributes of the coming conquerors,—the stern will and deep guile of the Norman chief—the comparative knowledge of the rising Norman Church—the nascent spirit of chivalry in the Norman vavasours; a spirit destined to emancipate the very people it contributed to enslave, associated, as it imperfectly was, with the sense of freedom: disdainful, it is true, of the villein, but proudly curbing, though into feudal limits, the domination of the liege. In a word, I must place fully before the reader, if I would be faithful to the plan of my work, the political and moral features of the age, as well as its lighter and livelier attributes, and so lead him to perceive, when he has closed the book, why England was conquered, and how England survived the Conquest.

In accomplishing this task, I inevitably incur the objections which the task itself raises up,—objections to the labor it has cost; to the information which the labor was undertaken in order to bestow; objections to passages which seem to interrupt the narrative, but which in reality prepare for the incidents it embraces, or explain the position of the persons whose characters it illustrates,—whose fate it involves; objections to the reference to authorities, where a fact might be

disputed, or mistaken for fiction; objections to the use of Saxon words, for which no accurate synonyms could be exchanged; objections, in short, to the coloring, conduct and composition of the whole work; objections to all that separate it from the common crowd of Romances, and stamp on it, for good or for bad, a character peculiarly its own. Objections of this kind I cannot remove, though I have carefully weighed them all. And with regard to the objection most important to story teller and novel reader—viz. the dryness of some of the earlier portions, though I have thrice gone over those passages, with the stern determination to inflict summary justice upon every unnecessary line, I must own to my regret that I have found but little which it was possible to omit without rendering the after narrative obscure, and without injuring whatever of more stirring interest the story, as it opens, may afford to the general reader of Romance.

As to the Saxon words used, an explanation of all those that can be presumed unintelligible to a person of ordinary education, is given either in the text or a foot-note. Such archaisms are much less numerous than certain critics would fain represent them to be; and they have rarely indeed been admitted where other words could have been employed without a glaring anachronism, or a tedious periphrase. Would it indeed be possible, for instance, to convey a notion of the customs and manners of our Saxon forefathers without employing words so mixed up with their daily usages and modes of thinking as "weregeld" and "niddering?" Would any words from the modern vocabulary suggest the same idea, or embody the same meaning?

One critic good-humoredly exclaims, "We have a full attendance of thegns and cnehts, but we should have liked much better our old friends and approved good masters thanes and knights." Nothing could be more apposite for my justification than the instances here quoted in censure; nothing could more plainly vindicate the necessity of employing the Saxon words. For I should sadly indeed have misled the reader, if I had used the word *knight* in an age when knights were wholly unknown to the Anglo-Saxon; and cneht no more means what we understand by knight, than a templar, in modern phrase, means a man in chain mail vowed to celibacy, and the redemption of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Musselman. While, since thegn and thane are both archaisms, I prefer the former; not only for the same reason that induces Sir Francis Palgrave to prefer it, viz. because it is the more etymologically correct; but because we take from our neighbors the Scotch, not only the word thane, but the sense in which we apply it; and that sense is not the same that we ought to attach to the various and complicated notions of nobility which the Anglo-Saxon comprehended in the title of thegn. It has been peremptorily said by more than one writer in periodicals, that I have overrated the erudition of William, in permitting him to know Latin; nay, to have read the Comments of Cæsar at the age of eight.—Where these gentlemen find the authorities to confute my statement I know not; all I know is, that in the statement I have followed the original authorities usually deemed the best. And I content myself with referring the disputants to a work not so difficult to procure as (and certainly more pleasant to read than) the old Chronicles. In Miss Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England," (Matilda of Flanders,) the same statement is made, and no doubt upon the same authorities.

More surprised should I be (if modern criticism had not taught me in all matters of assumption the *nil admirari*), to find it alleged that I have overstated not only the learning of the Norman duke, but that which flourished in Normandy under his reign; for I should have thought that the fact of the learning which sprung up in the most thriving period of that principality; the rapidity of its growth; the benefits it derived from Lanfranc; the encouragement it received from William, had been phenomena too remarkable in the annals of the age, and in the history of literature, to have met with an incredulity which the most moderate amount of information would have sufficed to dispel. Not to refer such sceptics to graver authorities, historical and ecclesiastical, in order to justify my representations of that learning which, under William the Bastard, made the schools of Normandy the

popular academies of Europe, a page or two in a book so accessible as Villemain's "Tableau du Moyen Age," will perhaps suffice to convince them of the hastiness of their censure, and the error of their impressions.

It is stated in the Athenæum, and, I believe, by a writer whose authority on the merits of opera singers I am far from contesting, but of whose competence to instruct the world in any other department of human industry or knowledge I am less persuaded, "that I am much mistaken when I represent not merely the clergy, but the young soldiers and courtiers of the reign of the Confessor, as well acquainted with the literature of Greece and Rome."

The remark, to say the least of it, is disingenuous. I have done no such thing. This general animadversion is only justified by a reference to the pedantry of the Norman Mallet de Graville—and it is expressly stated in the text that Mallet de Graville was originally intended for the church, and that it was the peculiarity of his literary information, rare in a soldier (but for which his earlier studies for the ecclesiastical calling readily account, at a time when the Norman convent of Bec was already so famous for the erudition of its teachers, and the number of its scholars), that attracted towards him the notice of Lanfranc, and founded his fortunes. Pedantry is made one of his characteristics (as it generally was the characteristic of any man with some pretensions to scholarship, in the earlier ages); and if he indulges in a classical allusion, whether in taunting a courtier or conversing with a "Saxon from the wealds of Kent," it is no more out of keeping with the pedantry ascribed to him, than it is unnatural in Dominie Sampson to rail at Meg Merrilies in Latin, or James the First to examine a young courtier in the same unfamiliar language. Nor should the critic in question, when inviting his readers to condemn me for making Mallet de Graville quote Horace, have omitted to state that de Graville expressly laments that he had never read, nor could even procure a copy of the Roman poet—judging only of the merits of Horace by an extract in some monkish author, who was equally likely to have picked up his quotation second-hand.

So, when a reference is made either by Graville, or by any one else in the romance, to Homeric fables and personages, a critic who had gone through the ordinary education of an English gentleman, would never thereby have assumed that the person so referring had read the poems of Homer themselves—he would have known that Homeric fables, or personages, though not the Homeric poems, were made familiar, by quaint travesties,* even to the most illiterate audience of the gothic age. It was scarcely more necessary to know Homer then than now, in order to have heard of Ulysses. The writer in the Athenæum is acquainted with Homeric personages, but who on earth would ever presume to assert that he is acquainted with Homer?

Some doubt has been thrown upon my accuracy in ascribing to the Anglo-Saxons the enjoyments of certain luxuries (gold and silver plate—the use of glass, etc.) which were extremely rare in an age much more recent. There is no ground for that doubt; nor is there a single article of such luxury named in the text, for the mention of which I have not ample authority.

I have indeed devoted to this work a degree of research which, if unusual to romance, I cannot consider superfluous when illustrating an age so remote, and events unparalleled in their influence over the destinies of England. Nor am I without the hope, that what the romance-reader at first regards as a defect, he may ultimately acknowledge as a merit;—forgiving me that strain on his attention by which alone I could leave distinct in his memory, the action and the actors in that solemn tragedy which closed on the field of Hastings, over the corpse of the Last Saxon King.

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* And long before the date of the travesty known to us, and most popular amongst our mediæval ancestors, it might be shown that some rude notion of Homer's fable and personages had crept into the North.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE NORMAN VISITOR, THE SAXON KING, AND THE DANISH PROPHETESS.

CHAPTER I.

MERRY was the month of May in the year of our Lord, 1052. Few were the boys, and few the lasses, who overslept themselves on the first of that buxom month. Long ere the dawn, the crowds had sought mead and woodland, to cut poles and wreathe flowers. Many a mead then lay fair and green beyond the village of Charing, and behind the isle of Thorney, (amidst the brakes and briars of which were then rising fast and fair the Hall and Abbey of Westminster;) many a wood lay dark in the starlight, along the higher ground that sloped from the dank Strand, with its numerous canals or dykes;—and on either side of the great road into Kent:—flutes and horns sounded far and near through the green places, and laughter and song, and the crash of breaking boughs.

As the dawn came gray up the east, arch and blooming faces bowed down to bathe in the May dew. Patient oxen stood dozing by the hedge-rows, all fragrant with blossoms, till the gay spoilers of the May came forth from the woods with lusty poles, followed by girls with laps full of flowers, which they had caught asleep. The poles were pranked with nosegays, and a chaplet was hung round the horns of every ox. Then towards day-break, the processions streamed back into the city, through all its gates; boys with their May-gads (peeled willow wands twined with cowslips) going before; and clear through the lively din of the horns and flutes, and amidst the moving grove of branches, choral voices, singing some early Saxon stave, precursor of the later song—

"We have brought the summer home."

Often in the good old days before the Monk-king reigned, kings and ealdermen had thus gone forth a-maying; but these merriments, savoring of heathenesse, that good prince misliked: nevertheless the song was as blithe, and the boughs were as green, as if king and ealderman had walked in the train.

On the great Kent road, the fairest meads for the cowslip, and the greenest woods for the bough, surrounded a large building that once had belonged to some voluptuous Roman, now all defaced and despoiled; but the boys and the lasses shunned those demesnes; and even in their mirth, as they passed homeward along the road, and saw near the ruined walls, and timbered outbuildings, gray Druid stones (that spoke of an age before either Saxon or Roman invader,) gleaming through the dawn—the song was hushed—the very youngest crossed themselves; and the elder, in solemn whispers, suggested the precaution of changing the song into a psalm. For in that old building dwelt Hilda, of famous and dark repute; Hilda, who, despite all law and canon, was still believed to practice the dismal arts of the Wicca and Morthwyrtha (the witch and worshipper of the dead). But once out of sight of those fearful precincts, the psalm was forgotten, and again broke, loud, clear, and silvery, the joyous chorus.

So, entering London about sunrise, doors and windows were duly wreathed with garlands; and every village in the suburbs had its May-pole, which stood in its place all the year. On that happy day labor rested; ceorl and theowe had alike a holiday to dance, and tumble round the May-pole; and

thus, on the first of May,—Youth, and Mirth, and Music, "brought the summer home."

The next day you might still see where the buxom bands had been; you might track their way by fallen flowers, and green leaves, and the deep ruts made by oxen, (yoked often in teams from twenty to forty, in the wains that carried home the poles;) and fair and frequent throughout the land, from any eminence, you might behold the hamlet swards still crowned with the May trees, and air still seemed fragrant with their garlands.

It is on that second day of May, 1052, that my story opens, at the House of Hilda, the reputed Morthwyrtha. It stood upon a gentle and verdant height; and, even through all the barbarous mutilation it had undergone from barbarian hands, enough was left strikingly to contrast the ordinary abodes of the Saxon.

The remains of Roman art were indeed still numerous throughout England, but it happened rarely that the Saxon had chosen his home amidst the villas of those noble and primal conquerors. Our first forefathers were more inclined to destroy than to adapt.

By what chance this building became an exception to the ordinary rule, it is now impossible to conjecture, but from a very remote period it had sheltered successive races of Teuton lords.

The changes wrought in the edifice were mournful and grotesque. What was now the Hall, had evidently been the atrium; the round shield, with its pointed boss, the spear, sword, and small curved sæx of the early Teuton, were suspended from the columns on which once had been wreathed the flowers; in the centre of the floor, where fragments of the old Mosaic still glistened from the hard-pressed paving of clay and lime, what now was the fire-place, had been the impluvium, and the smoke went sullenly through the aperture in the roof, made of old to receive the rains of heaven. Around the Hall were still left the old cubicula or dormitories, (small, high, and lighted but from the doors,) which now served for the sleeping rooms of the humbler guest or the household servant; while at the farther end of the Hall, the wide space between the columns, which had once given ample vista from graceful awnings into tablinum and viridarium, was filled up with rude rubble and Roman bricks, leaving but a low, round, arched door, that still led into the tablinum. But that tablinum, formerly the gayest state-room of the Roman lord, was now filled with various lumber, piles of fagots, and farming utensils. On either side of this desecrated apartment, stretched, to the right, the old lararium, stripped of its ancient images of ancestor and god; to the left, what had been the gynœcium (women's apartment).

One side of the ancient peristyle, which was of vast extent, was now converted into stabling, sties for swine, and stalls for oxen. On the other side was constructed a Christian chapel, made of rough oak planks, fastened by plates at the top, and with a roof of thatched reeds. The columns and wall at the extreme end of the peristyle were a mass of ruins, through the gigantic rents of which loomed a grassy hillock, its sides partially covered with clumps of furze. On this hillock were the mutilated remains of an ancient Druidical crommel, in the centre of which (near a funeral mound, or barrow, with the bautastean, or gravestone, of some early Saxon chief at one end) had been sacrilegiously placed an altar to Thor, as was apparent both from the shape, from a rude, half-obliterated, sculptured relief of the god, with his lifted hammer, and a few Runic letters. Amidst the temple of the Briton the Saxon had reared the shrine of his triumphant war-god.

Now still, amidst the ruins of that extreme side of the peristyle which opened to this hillock were left, first, an ancient Roman fountain, that now served to water the swine, and next, a small sacellum, or fane to Bacchus (as relief and frieze, yet spared, betokened): thus the eye, at one survey, beheld the shrines of four creeds; the Druid, mystical and symbolical; the Roman, sensual, but humane; the Teutonic, ruthless and destroying; and, latest risen and surviving all, though as yet with but little of its gentler influence over the deeds of men, the edifice of the Faith of Peace.

Across the peristyle, theowes and swineherds passed to and fro:—in the atrium, men of a higher class, half armed, were, some

drinking, some at dice, some playing with huge hounds, or caressing the hawks that stood grave and solemn on their perches.

The lararium was deserted; the gynœcium was still, as in the Roman time, the favored apartment of the female portion of the household, and indeed bore the same name,*—and with the group there assembled we have now to do.

The appliances of the chamber showed the rank and wealth of the owner. At that period the domestic luxury of the rich was infinitely greater than has been generally supposed. The industry of the women decorated wall and furniture with needlework and hangings: and as a Thegn forfeited his rank if he lost his lands, so the higher orders of an aristocracy rather of wealth than birth, had, usually, a certain portion of superfluous riches, which served to flow towards the bazaars of the East and the nearer markets of Flanders and Saracenic Spain.

In this room the walls were draped with silken hangings richly embroidered. The single window was glazed with a dull gray glass.† On a beaufet were ranged horns tipped with silver, and a few vessels of pure gold. A small circular table in the centre was supported by symbolical monsters quaintly carved. At one side of the wall, on a long settle, some half-a-dozen handmaids were employed in spinning; remote from them, and near the window, sat a woman advanced in years, and of a mien and aspect singularly majestic. Upon a small tripod before her was a Runic manuscript, and an inkstand of elegant form, with a silver graphium, or pen. At her feet reclined a girl somewhat about the age of sixteen, her long fair hair parted across her forehead and falling far down her shoulders. Her dress was a linen under tunic, with long sleeves, rising high to the throat, and without one of the modern artificial restraints of the shape, the simple belt sufficed to show the slender proportions and delicate outline of the wearer. The color of the dress was of the purest white, but its hems, or borders, were richly embroidered. This girl's beauty was something marvellous. In a land proverbial for fair women, it had already obtained her the name of "the fair." In that beauty were blended, not as yet without a struggle for mastery, the two expressions seldom united in one countenance, the soft and the noble; indeed in the whole aspect there was the evidence of some internal struggle; the intelligence was not yet complete; the soul and heart were not yet united: and Edith the Christian maid dwelt in the home of Hilda the heathen prophetess. The girl's blue eyes, rendered dark by the shade of their long lashes, were fixed intently upon the stern and troubled countenance which was bent upon her own, but bent with that abstract gaze which shows that the soul is absent from the sight. So sate Hilda, and so reclined her grandchild Edith.

"Grandam," said the girl in a low voice and after a long pause; and the sound of her voice so startled the handmaids, that every spindle stopped for a moment, and then plied with renewed activity; "Grandam, what troubles you—are you not thinking of the great Earl and his fair sons, now outlawed far over the wide seas?"

As the girl spoke, Hilda started slightly, like one awakened from a dream; and when Edith had concluded her question, she rose slowly to the height of a statue, unbowed by her years, and far towering above even the ordinary standard of men; and turning from the child, her eye fell upon the row of silent maids, each at her rapid, noiseless, stealthy work. "Ho!" said she; her cold and haughty eye gleaming as she spoke; "yesterday, they brought home the summer—to-day, ye aid to bring home the winter. Weave well—heed well warf and woof; Skulda* is amongst ye, and her pale fingers guide the web!"

The maidens lifted not their eyes, though

* "The apartment in which the Anglo-Saxon women lived, was called Gynecium."—FOSBROOKE, vol. ii. p. 570.

† Glass, introduced about the time of Bede, was more common then in the houses of the wealthy, whether for vessels or windows, than in the much later age of the gorgeous Plantagenets. Alfred, in one of his poems, introduces glass as a familiar illustration:—

"So oft the mild sea
With south wind
As gray glass clear
Becomes grimly troubled."

SHAR. TURNER.

* Skulda, the Norna, or Fate, that presided over the future.

in every cheek the color paled at the words of the mistress. The spindles revolved, the thread shot, and again there was silence more freezing than before.

"Askest thou," said Hilda at length, passing to the child, as if the question so long addressed to her ear had only just reached her mind; "askest thou if I thought of the Earl and his fair sons?—yea, I heard the smith welding arms on the anvil, and the hammer of the shipwright shaping strong ribs for the horses of the sea. Ere the reaper has bound his sheaves, Earl Godwin will scare the Normans in the halls of the Monk King, as the hawk scares the brood in the dovecot. Weave well, heed well warf and woof, nimble maidens—strong be the texture, for biting is the worm."

"What weave they, then, good grandmother?" asked the girl, with wonder and awe in her soft mild eyes.

"The winding-sheet of the great!"

Hilda's lips closed, but her eyes, yet brighter than before, gazed upon space, and her pale hand seemed tracing letters, like runes, in the air.

Then slowly she turned, and looked forth through the dull window. "Give me my coverchief and my staff," said she quickly.

Every one of the handmaids, blithe for excuse to quit a task which seemed recently commenced, and was certainly not endeared to them by the knowledge of its purpose communicated to them by the lady, rose to obey.

Unheeding the hands that vied with each other, Hilda took the hood, and drew it partially over her brow. Leaning lightly on a long staff, the head of which formed a raven, carved from some wood stained black, she passed into the hall, and thence through the desecrated tablinum, into the mighty court formed by the shattered peristyle; there she stopped, mused a moment, and called on Edith. The girl was soon by her side.

"Come with me.—There is a face you shall see but twice in life;—this day,"—and Hilda paused, and the rigid and almost colossal beauty of her countenance softened.

"And when again, my grandmother?"

"Child, put thy warm hand in mine. So! the vision darkens from me.—When again, saidst thou, Edith?—alas, I know not."

While thus speaking, Hilda passed slowly by the Roman fountain and the heathen fane, and ascended the little hillock. There, on the opposite side of the summit, backed by the Druid crommel and the Teuton altar, she seated herself deliberately on the sward.

A few daisies, primroses, and cowslips, grew around; these Edith began to pluck. Singing, as she wove, a simple song, that, not more by the dialect than the sentiment, betrayed its origin in the ballad of the Norse,* which had, in its more careless composition, a character quite distinct from the artificial poetry of the Saxons. The song may be thus imperfectly rendered:

"Merrily the throstle sings
Amid the merry May;
The throstle sings but to my ear;
My heart is far away!

Blithely bloometh mead and bank;
And blithely buds the tree;
And hark!—they bring the Summer home;
It has no home with me!

They have outlaw'd *him*—my Summer!
An outlaw far away!—
The birds may sing, the flowers may bloom,—
O, give me back my May!"

As she came to the last line, her soft low voice seemed to awaken a chorus of sprightly horns and trumpets, and certain other wind instruments peculiar to the music of that day. The hillock bordered the high road to London—which then wound through wastes of forest land—and now emerging from the trees to the left appeared a goodly company. First came two riders abreast, each holding a banner. On the one was depicted the cross and five martlets, the device of Edward, afterwards surnamed the Confessor: on the other, a plain broad cross with a deep border round it, and the streamer shaped into sharp points.

The first was familiar to Edith, who

* The historians of our literature have not done justice to the great influence which the poetry of the Danes has had upon our early national muse. I have little doubt but that to that source may be traced the minstrelsy of our borders, and the Scottish Lowlands; while, even in the central counties, the example and exertions of Canute must have had considerable effect on the taste and spirit of our Scops. That great prince afforded the amplest encouragement to Scandinavian poetry, and Olaus names eight Danish poets, who flourished at his court.

dropped her garland to gaze on the approaching pageant; the last was strange to her. She had been accustomed to see the banner of the great Earl Godwin by the side of the Saxon king; and she said, almost indignantly,

"Who dares, sweet grandam, to place banner or pennon where Earl Godwin's ought to float?"

"Peace," said Hilda, "peace and look."

Immediately behind the standard-bearers came two figures—strangely dissimilar indeed in mien, in years, in bearing: each bore on his left wrist a hawk. The one was mounted on a milk-white palfrey, with housings inlaid with gold and uncut jewels. Though not really old—for he was much on this side of sixty: both his countenance and carriage evinced age. His complexion, indeed, was extremely fair, and his cheeks ruddy; but the visage was long and deeply furrowed, and from beneath a bonnet not dissimilar to those in use among the Scotch, streamed hair long and white as snow, mingling with a large and forked beard. White seemed his chosen color. White was the upper tunic clasped on his shoulder with a broad ouche or brooch; white the woollen leggings fitted to somewhat emaciated limbs; and white the mantle, though broidered with a broad hem of gold and purple. The fashion of his dress was that which well became a noble person, but it suited ill the somewhat frail and graceless figure of the rider. Nevertheless, as Edith saw him, she rose, with an expression of deep reverence on her countenance, and saying, "It is our lord the King," advanced some steps down the hillock, and there stood, her arms folded on her breast, and quite forgetful, in her innocence and youth, that she had left the house without the cloak and coverchief which were deemed indispensable to the fitting appearance of maid and matron when they were seen abroad.

"Fair sir, and brother mine," said the deep voice of the younger rider, in the Romance or Norman tongue, "I have heard that the small people of whom my neighbors, the Bretons, tell us much, abound greatly in this fair land of yours; and if I were not by the side of one whom no creature unassoilzed and unbaptized dare approach, by sweet St. Valery I should say—yonder stands one of those same *gentilles fées!*"

King Edward's eye followed the direction of his companion's outstretched hand, and his quiet brow slightly contracted as he beheld the young form of Edith standing motionless a few yards before him, with the warm May wind lifting and playing with her long golden locks. He checked his palfrey, and murmured some Latin words which the knight beside him recognized as a prayer, and to which, doffing his cap, he added an Amen, in a tone of such unctuous gravity, that the royal saint rewarded him with a faint approving smile, and an affectionate "*Bene, bene, Piosissime.*"

Then inclining his palfrey's head towards the knoll, he motioned to the girl to approach him. Edith, with a heightened color, obeyed, and came to the roadside. The standard-bearers halted; as did the king and his comrade—the procession halted—thirty knights, two bishops, eight abbots, all on fiery steeds and in Norman garb—squires and attendants on foot—a long and pompous retinue—they halted all. Only a stray hound or two broke from the rest, and wandered into the forest land with heads trailing.

"Edith, my child," said Edward, still in Norman-French, for he spoke his own language with hesitation, and the Romance tongue, which had long been familiar to the higher classes in England, had, since his accession, become the only language in use at court, and as such every one of 'Eorl-kind' was supposed to speak it;—"Edith, my child, thou hast not forgotten my lessons, I trow; thou singest the hymns I gave thee, and neglectest not to wear the relic round thy neck."

The girl hung her head, and spoke not.

"How comes it, then," continued the King, with a voice to which he in vain endeavored to impart an accent of severity, "how comes it, O little one, that thou, whose thoughts should be lifted already above this carnal world, and eager for the service of Mary the chased and blessed, standest thus hoodless and alone on the waysides, a mark for the eyes of men? go to, it is naught."

Thus reproved, and in presence of so large and brilliant a company, the girl's color went and came, her breast heaved high, but with an effort beyond her age she checked her tears, and said meekly, "My grand-

mother, Hilda, bade me come with her, and I came."

"Hilda!" said the King, backing his palfrey with apparent perturbation, "but Hilda is not with thee; I see her not."

As he spoke, Hilda rose, and so suddenly did her tall form appear on the brow of the hill, that it seemed as if she had emerged from the earth. With a light and rapid stride she gained the side of her grandchild; and after a slight and haughty reverence, said, "Hilda is here; what wants Edward the King with his servant Hilda?"

"Nought, nought," said the King, hastily; and something like fear passed over his placid countenance; "save, indeed," he added, with a reluctant tone, as of that of a man who obeys his conscience against his inclination, "that I would pray thee to keep this child pure to threshold and altar, as is meet for one whom our Lady, the Virgin, in due time, will elect to her service."

"Not so, son of Etheldred, son of Woden, the last descendant of Penda should live, not to glide a ghost amidst cloisters, but to rock children for war in their father's shield. Few men are there yet like the men of old; and while the foot of the foreigner is on the Saxon soil no branch of the stem of Woden should be nipped in the leaf."

"*Per la resplendar Dé*,* bold dame," cried the knight by the side of Edward, while a lurid flush passed over his cheek of bronze; "but thou art too glib of tongue for a subject, and pratest overmuch of Woden, the Paynim, for the lips of a Christian matron."

Hilda met the flashing eye of the knight with a brow of lofty scorn, on which still a certain terror was visible.

"Child," she said, putting her hand upon Edith's fair locks; "this is the man thou shalt see but twice in thy life;—look up, and mark well!"

Edith instinctively raised her eyes, and, once fixed upon the knight, they seemed chained as by a spell. His vest, of a cramoisay so dark, that it seemed black beside the snowy garb of the Confessor, was edged by a deep band of embroidered gold; leaving perfectly bare his firm, full throat—firm and full as a column of granite,—a short jacket or manteline of fur, pendant from the shoulders, left developed in all its breadth a breast that seemed meet to stay the march of an army; and on the left arm, curved to support the falcon, the vast muscles rose, round and gnarled, through the close sleeve.

In height, he was really but little above the stature of many of those present;* nevertheless, so did his port, his air, the nobility of his large proportions, fill the eye, that he seemed to tower immeasurably above the rest.

His countenance was yet more remarkable than his form; still in the prime of youth, he seemed at the first glance younger, at the second older, than he was. At the first glance younger; for his face was perfectly shaven, without even the moustache which the Saxon courtier, in imitating the Norman, still declined to surrender; and the smooth visage and bare throat sufficed in themselves to give the air of youth to that dominant and imperious presence. His small skull-cap left unconcealed his forehead, shaded with short thick hair, uncurled, but black and glossy as the wings of a raven. It was on that forehead that time had set its trace; it was knit into a frown over the eyebrows; lines deep as furrows crossed its broad, but not elevated expanse. That frown spoke of hasty ire and the habit of stern command; those furrows spoke of deep thought and plotting scheme: the one betrayed but temper and circumstance; the other, more noble, spoke of the character and the intellect. The face was square, and the regard lion-like; the mouth —small, and even beautiful in outline—had a sinister expression in its exceeding firmness; and the jaw—vast, solid, as if bound in iron—showed obstinate, ruthless, determined will; such a jaw as belongs to the tiger amongst beasts, and the conqueror amongst men; such as it is seen in the effigies of Cæsar, of Cortes, of Napoleon.

That presence was well calculated to command the admiration of women, not less than the awe of men. But no admiration mingled with the terror that seized the girl as she gazed long and wistful upon the knight. The fascination of the serpent on the bird held her mute and frozen. Never

* "By the splendor of God."

* See note (*a*) at the end.

was that face forgotten; often in after-life it haunted her in the noonday, it frowned upon her dreams.

"Fair child," said the knight, fatigued at length by the obstinacy of the gaze, while that smile peculiar to those who have commanded men relaxed his brow, and restored the native beauty to his lip, "fair child, learn not from thy peevish grandam so uncourteous a lesson as hate of the foreigner. As thou growest into womanhood, know that Norman knight is sworn slave to lady fair;" and, doffing his cap, he took from it an uncut jewel, set in Byzantine filagree work. "Hold out thy lap, my child; and when thou hearest the foreigner scoffed, set this bauble in thy locks, and think kindly of William, Count of the Normans." *

He dropped the jewel on the ground as he spoke; for Edith, shrinking and unsoftened towards him, held no lap to receive it; and Hilda, to whom Edward had been speaking in a low voice, advanced to the spot and struck the jewel with her staff under the hoofs of the King's palfrey.

"Son of Emma, the Norman woman, who sent thy youth into exile, trample on the gifts of thy Norman kinsman. And if, as men say, thou art of such gifted holiness that Heaven grants thy hand the power to heal, and thy voice the power to curse, heal thy country, and curse the stranger!"

She extended her right arm to William as she spoke, and such was the dignity of her passion, and such its force, that an awe fell upon all. Then dropping her hood over her face, she slowly turned away, regained the summit of the knoll, and stood erect beside the altar of the Northern god, her face invisible through the hood drawn completely over it, and her form motionless as a statue.

"Ride on," said Edward, crossing himself.

"Now by the bones of St. Valery," said William, after a pause, in which his dark keen eye noted the gloom upon the King's gentle face, "it moves much my simple wonder how even presence so saintly can bear without wrath words so unleal and foul. Gramercy, 'an the proudest dame in Normandy (and I take her to be wife to my stoutest baron, William Fitzosborne), had spoken thus to me—"

"Thou wouldst have done as I, my brother," interrupted Edward; "prayed to our Lord to pardon her, and rode on pitying."

William's lip quivered with ire, yet he curbed the reply that sprang to it, and he looked with affection genuinely more akin to admiration than scorn, upon his fellow prince. For, fierce and relentless as the Duke's deeds were, his faith was notably sincere; and while this made, indeed, the prince's chief attraction to the pious Edward, so on the other hand, this bowed the Duke in a kind of involuntary and superstitious homage to the man who sought to square deeds to faith. It is ever the case with stern and stormy spirits, that the meek ones which contrast them steal strangely into their affections. This principle of human nature can alone account for the enthusiastic devotion which the mild sufferings of the Saviour awoke in the fiercest exterminators of the North. In proportion, often, to the warrior's ferocity, was his love to that Divine model, at whose sufferings he wept, to whose tomb he wandered barefoot, and whose example of compassionate forgiveness he would have thought himself the basest of men to follow!

"Now, by my Halidame, I honor and love thee, Edward," cried the Duke, with a heartiness more frank than was usual to him; "and were I thy subject, woe to man or woman that wagged tongue to wound thee by a breath. But who and what is this same Hilda? one of thy kith and kin?—surely not less than kingly blood runs so bold?"

"William, *bien aimé*," * said the King, "it is true that Hilda, whom the saints assoil, is of kingly blood, though not of our kingly line. It is feared," added Edward, in a timid whisper, as he cast a hurried glance around him, "that this unhappy woman has

* It is noticeable that the Norman dukes did not call themselves Counts or Dukes of Normandy, but of the Normans; and the first Anglo-Norman kings, till Richard the First, styled themselves kings of the English, not of England. In both Saxon and Norman chronicles, William usually bears the title of *Count* (Comes), but in this tale he will be generally called Duke, as a title more familiar to us.

* The few expressions borrowed occasionally from the Romance tongue, to give individuality to the speaker, will generally be translated into modern French; for the same reason as Saxon is rendered into modern English, viz. that the words may be intelligible to the reader.

ever been more addicted to the rights of her pagan ancestors than those of Holy Church; and men do say that she hath thus acquired from fiend or charm secrets devoutly to be eschewed by the righteous. Nathless, let us rather hope that her mind is somewhat distraught with her misfortunes."

The King sighed, and the Duke sighed too, but the Duke's sigh spoke impatience. He swept behind him a stern and withering look towards the proud figure of Hilda, still seen through the glades, and said in a sinister voice: "Of kingly blood; but this witch of Woden hath no sons or kinsmen, I trust, who pretend to the throne of the Saxon?"

"She is sibbe to Githa, wife of Godwin," answered the King, "and that is her most perilous connection; for the banished Earl, as thou knowest, did not pretend to fill the throne, but he was content with nought less than governing our people."

The King then proceeded to sketch an outline of the history of Hilda, but his narrative was so deformed both by his superstitions and prejudices, and his imperfect information in all the leading events and characters in his own kingdom, that we will venture to take upon ourselves his task; and while the train ride on through glade and mead, we will briefly narrate, from our own special sources of knowledge, the chronicle of Hilda, the Scandinavian Vala.

CHAPTER II.

A MAGNIFICENT race of men were those war sons of the old North, whom our popular histories, so superficial in their accounts of this age, include in the common name of the "Danes." They replunged into barbarism the nations over which they swept; but from that barbarism they reproduced the noblest elements of civilization. Swede, Norwegian, and Dane, differing in some minor points, when closely examined, had yet one common character viewed at a distance. They had the same prodigious energy, the same passion for freedom, individual and civil, the same splendid errors in the thirst for fame and the "point of honor;" and above all, as a main cause of civilization, they were wonderfully pliant and malleable in their admixtures with the peoples they overran. This is their true distinction from the stubborn Celt, who refuses to mingle, and disdains to improve.

Frankes, the archbishop, baptized Rolfganger;* and within a little more than a century afterwards, the descendants of those terrible heathens, who had spared neither priest nor altar, were the most redoubtable defenders of the Christian Church; their old language forgotten (save by a few in the town of Bayeux), their ancestral names† (save among a few of the noblest), changed into French titles, and little else but the indomitable valor of the Scandinavian remained unaltered amongst the arts and manners of the Frankish-Norman.

In like manner their kindred tribes, who had poured into Saxon England, to ravage and lay desolate, had no sooner obtained from Alfred the Great permanent homes, than they became perhaps the most powerful, and in a short time, not the least patriotic, part of the Anglo-Saxon population.‡ At the time our story opens, these Northmen,

* "Roman de Rou," part i. v. 1914.

† The reason why the Normans lost their old names is to be found in their conversion to Christianity. They were baptized; and Franks, as their godfathers, gave them new appellations. Thus, Charles the Simple insists that Rolf-ganger shall change his law (creed), and his name, and Rolf or Rou is christened Robert. A few of those who retained Scandinavian names at the time of the Conquest will be cited hereafter.

‡ Thus in 991, about a century after the first settlement, the Danes of East Anglia gave the only efficient resistance to the host of the Vikings under Justin and Gurthmund; and Brithnoth, celebrated by the Saxon poet, as a Saxon, *par excellence* the heroic defender of his native soil, was, in all probability, of Danish decent. Mr. Laing, in his preface to his translation of the Heimskringla, truly observes, "that the rebellions against William the Conqueror, and his successors, appear to have been almost always raised, or mainly supported, in the counties of recent Danish descent, not in those peopled by the old Anglo-Saxon race."

The portion of Mercia, consisting of the burghs of Lancaster, Lincoln, Nottingham, Stamford, and Derby, became a Danish State in A. D. 877;—East Anglia, consisting of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, and the Isle of Ely, in A. D. 879-80;—and the vast territory of Northumbria, extending all north the Humber, into all that part of Scotland south of the Frith, in A. D. 876.—See PALGRAVE'S *Commonwealth*. But, besides their more allotted settlements, the Danes were interspersed as landowners all over England.

under the common name of Danes, were peaceably settled in no less than fifteen * counties in England; their nobles abounded in towns and cities beyond the boundaries of those counties which bore the distinct appellation of Danelagh. They were numerous in London; in the precincts of which they had their own burial-place, to the chief municipal court of which they gave their own appellation—the Hustings.† Their power in the national assembly of the Witan had decided the choice of kings. Thus, with some differences of law and dialect, these once turbulent invaders had amalgamated amicably with the native race.‡ And to this day, the gentry, traders, and farmers of more than one-third of England, and in those counties most confessed to be in the van of improvement, descend, from Saxon mothers indeed, but from Viking fathers. There was in reality little difference in race between the Norman knight of the time of Henry I. and the Saxon franklin of Norfolk and York. Both on the mother's side would most probably have been Saxon, both on the father's would have traced to the Scandinavian.

But though this character of adaptability was general, exceptions in some points were necessarily found, and these were obstinate in proportion to the adherence to the old pagan faith, or the sincere conversion to Christianity. The Norwegian chronicles, and passages in our own history, show how false and hollow was the assumed Christianity of many of these fierce Odin-worshippers. They willingly enough accepted the outward sign of baptism, but the holy water changed little of the inner man. Even Harold, the son of Canute, scarce seventeen years before the date we have now entered, being unable to obtain from the Archbishop of Canterbury —who had espoused the cause of his brother Hardicanute—the consecrating benediction, lived and reigned as one "who had abjured Christianity." *

The priests, especially on the Scandinavian continent, were often forced to compound with their grim converts, by indulgence to certain habits, such as indiscriminate polygamy. To eat horseflesh in honor of Odin, and to marry wives *ad libitum*, were the main stipulations of the neophytes. And the puzzled monks, often driven to a choice, yielded the point of the wives, but stood firm on the graver article of the horse-flesh.

With their new religion, very imperfectly understood, even when genuinely received, they retained all that host of heathen superstition which knits itself with the most obstinate instincts in the human breast. Not many years before the reign of the Confessor, the laws of the great Canute against witchcraft and charms, the worship of stones, fountains, runes by ash and elm, and the incantations that do homage to the dead, were obviously rather intended to apply to the recent Danish converts, than to the Anglo-Saxons, already sujugated for centuries, body and soul, to the domination of the Christian monks.

Hilda, a daughter of the royalty of Denmark, and cousin to Githa (niece to Canute, whom that king had bestowed in second spousals upon Godwin), had come over to England with a fierce Jarl, her husband, a year after Canute's accession to the throne—both converted nominally, both secretly believers in Thor and Odin.

Hilda's husband had fallen in one of the actions in the Northern seas, between Canute and St. Olave, King of Norway (that saint himself, by the by, a most ruthless persecutor of his forefathers' faith, and a most unqualified practical asserter of his heathen privilege to extend his domestic affections beyond the severe pale which should have confined them to a single wife. His natural son Magnus then sat on the Danish throne). The Jarl died as he had wished to die, the last man on board his ship, with the soothing conviction that the Valkyrs would bear him to Valhalla.

* *Bromton Chron.*—viz., Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Herts, Cambridgeshire, Hants, Lincoln, Notts, Derby, Northampton, Leicestershire, Bucks, Beds, and the vast territory called Northumbria.

† PALGRAVE'S *History of England*, p. 315.

‡ The laws collected by Edward the Confessor, and in later times so often and so fondly referred to, contain many introduced by the Danes, which had grown popular with the Saxon people. Much which we ascribe to the Norman Conqueror, pre-existed in the Anglo-Danish, and may be found both in Normandy, and parts of Scandinavia, to this day.—See HAKEWELL'S *Treatise on the Antiquity of Laws in this Island, in* HEARNE'S *Curious Discourses.*

* PALGRAVE'S *History of England*, p. 322.

Hilda was left with an only daughter, whom Canute bestowed on Ethelwolf, a Saxon Earl of large domains, and tracing his descent from Penda, that old king of Mercia who refused to be converted, but said so discreetly "that he had no objection to his neighbors being Christians, if they would practise that peace and forgiveness which the monks told him were the elements of the faith."

Ethelwolf fell under the displeasure of Hardicanute, perhaps because he was more Saxon than Danish; and though that savage king did not dare openly to arraign him before the Witan, he gave secret orders by which he was butchered on his own hearth-stone, in the arms of his wife, who died shortly afterwards of grief and terror. The only orphan of this unhappy pair, Edith, was thus consigned to the charge of Hilda.

It was a necessary and invaluable characteristic of that "adaptability" which distinguished the Danes, that they transferred to the land in which they settled all the love they had borne to that of their ancestors; and so far as attachment to soil was concerned, Hilda had grown no less in heart an Englishwoman, than if she had been born and reared amidst the glades and knolls from which the smoke of her hearth rose through the old Roman compluvium.

But in all else she was a Dane. Dane in her creed and her habits—Dane in her intense and brooding imagination—in the poetry that filled her soul, peopled the air with spectres, and covered the leaves of the trees with charms. Living in austere seclusion after the death of her lord, to whom she had borne a Scandinavian woman's devoted but heroic love,—sorrowing indeed for his death, but rejoicing that he fell amidst the feast of ravens,—her mind settled more and more, year by year, and day by day, upon those visions of the unknown world, which, in every faith, conjure up the companions of solitude and grief.

Witchcraft in the Scandinavian North assumed many forms, and was connected by many degrees. There was the old and withered hag, on whom, in our later mediæval ages, the character was mainly bestowed; there was the terrific witch-wife, or wolf-witch, who seems wholly apart from human birth and attributes, like the weird sisters of Macbeth—creatures who entered the house at night, and seized warriors to devour them, who might be seen gliding over the sea, with the carcase of the wolf dripping blood from their giant jaws; and there was the more serene, classical, and awful vala, or sibyl, who, honored by chiefs, and revered by nations, foretold the future, and advised the deeds of heroes. Of these last, the Norse chronicles tell us much. They were often of rank and wealth, they were accompanied by trains of handmaids and servants—kings led them (when their counsel was sought) to the place of honor in the hall—and their heads were sacred, as those of ministers to the gods.

This last state in the grisly realm of the Wig-lær (wizard-lore) was the one naturally appertaining to the high rank, and the soul lofty though blind and perverted, of the daughter of warrior-kings. All practice of the art to which now for long years she had devoted herself, that touched upon the humble destinies of the vulgar, the child of Odin * haughtily disdained. Her reveries were upon the fate of kings and kingdoms; she aspired to save or to rear the dynasties which should rule the races yet unborn. In youth proud and ambitious,—common faults with her countrywomen,—on her entrance into the darker world, she carried with her the prejudices and passions that she had known in that colored by the external sun.

All her human affections were centred in her grandchild Edith, the last of a race royal on either side. Her researches into the future had assured her, that the life and death of this fair child were entwined with the fates of a king, and the same oracles had intimated a mysterious and inseparable connection between her own shattered house and the flourishing one of Earl Godwin, the spouse of her kinswoman Githa; so that with this great family she was as intimately bound by the links of superstition as by the ties of blood. The eldest born of Godwin, Sweyn, had been at first especially her care and her favorite; and he, of more poetic tempera-

* The name of this god is spelt *Odin*, when referred to as the object of Scandinavian worship; *Woden*, when applied directly to the deity of the Saxons.

ment than his brothers, had willingly submitted to her influence. But of all the brethren, as will be seen hereafter, the career of Sweyn had been most noxious and ill-omened, and at that moment, while the rest of the house carried with it into exile the deep and indignant sympathy of England, no man said of Sweyn, "God bless him!"

But as the second son, Harold, had grown from childhood into youth, Hilda had singled him out with a preference even more marked than that she had bestowed upon Sweyn. The stars and the runes assured her of his future greatness, and the qualities and talents of the young Earl had, at the very onset of his career, confirmed the accuracy of their predictions. Her interest in Harold became the more intense, partly because whenever she consulted the future for the lot of her grandchild Edith, she invariably found it associated with the fate of Harold—partly because all her arts had failed to penetrate beyond a certain point in their joint destinies, and left her mind agitated and perplexed between hope and terror. As yet, however, she had wholly failed in gaining any ascendancy over the young Earl's vigorous and healthful mind; and though before his exile, he came more often than any of Godwin's sons to the old Roman house, he had smiled with proud incredulity at her vague prophecies, and rejected all her offers of aid from invisible agencies with the calm reply—"The brave man wants no charms to encourage him to his duty, and the good man scorns all warnings that would deter him from fulfilling it."

Indeed, though Hilda's magic was not of the malevolent kind, and sought the source of its oracles not in fiends but gods (at least the gods in whom she believed), it was noticeable that all over whom her influence had prevailed had come to miserable and untimely ends;—not alone her husband and her son-in-law (both of whom had been as wax to her counsel), but such other chiefs as rank or ambition permitted to appeal to her lore. Nevertheless, such was the ascendancy she had gained over the popular mind, that it would have been dangerous in the highest degree to put into execution against her the laws condemnatory of witchcraft. In her, all the more powerful Danish families reverenced, and would have protected, the blood of their ancient kings, and the widow of one of their most renowned heroes. Hospitable, liberal, and beneficent to the poor, and an easy mistress over numerous ceorls, while the vulgar dreaded, they would yet have defended her. Proofs of her art it would have been hard to establish; hosts of compurgators to attest her innocence would have sprung up. Even if subjected to the ordeal, her gold could easily have bribed the priests with whom the power of evading its dangers rested. And with that worldly wisdom which persons of genius in their wildest chimeras rarely lack, she had already freed herself from the chance of active persecution from the Church, by ample donations to all the neighboring monasteries.

Hilda, in fine, was a woman of sublime desires and extraordinary gifts; terrible, indeed, but as the passive agent of the Fates she invoked, and rather commanding for herself a certain troubled admiration, and mysterious pity; no fiend-hag, beyond humanity, in malice and in power, but essentially human, even when aspiring most to the secrets of a god. Assuming, for the moment, that by the aid of intense imagination, persons of a peculiar idiosyncrasy of nerves and temperament might attain to such dim affinities with a world beyond our ordinary senses, as forbid entire rejection of the magnetism and magic of old times—it was on no foul and mephitic pool, overhung with the poisonous nightshade, and excluded from the beams of heaven, but on the living stream on which the star trembled, and beside whose banks the green herbage waved, that the demon shadows fell dark and dread.

Thus safe and thus awful, lived Hilda; and under her care, a rose beneath the funeral cedar, bloomed her grandchild Edith, goddaughter of the Lady of England.

It was the anxious wish, both of Edward and his virgin wife, pious as himself, to save this orphan from the contamination of a house more than suspected of heathen faith, and give to her youth the refuge of the convent. But this, without her guardian's consent or her own expressed will, could not be legally done; and Edith as yet had expressed no desire to disobey her grandmother, who

treated the idea of the convent with lofty scorn.

This beautiful child grew up under the influence, as it were, of two contending creeds; all her notions on both were necessarily confused and vague. But her heart was so genuinely mild, simple, tender, and devoted,—there was in her so much of the inborn excellence of the sex, that in every impulse of that heart struggled for clearer light and for purer air the unquiet soul. In manner, in thought, and in person, as yet almost an infant, deep in her heart lay yet one woman's secret, known scarcely to herself, but which taught her, more powerfully than Hilda's proud and scoffing tongue, to shudder at the thought of the barren cloister and the eternal vow.

CHAPTER III.

While King Edward was narrating to the Norman Duke all that he knew, and all that he knew not, of Hilda's history and secret arts, the road wound through lands as wild and wold-like as if the metropolis of England lay a hundred miles distant. Even to this day, patches of such land in the neighborhood of Norwood, may betray what the country was in the old time:—when a mighty forest, 'abounding with wild beasts'—'the bull and the boar'—skirted the suburbs of London, and afforded pastime to king and thegn. For the Norman kings have been maligned by the popular notion, that assigns to them *all* the odium of the forest laws. Harsh and severe were those laws in the reign of the Anglo-Saxon; as harsh and severe, perhaps, against the ceorl and the poor man, as in the days of Rufus, though more mild unquestionably to the nobles. To all beneath the rank of abbot and thegn, the king's woods were made, even by the mild Confessor, as sacred as the groves of the Druids: and no less penalty than that of life was incurred by the low-born huntsman who violated their recesses.*

Edward's only mundane passion was the chase; and a day rarely passed, but what after mass he went forth with hawk or hound. So that, though the regular season for hawking did not commence till October, he had ever on his wrist some young falcon to essay, or some old favorite to exercise. And now, just as William was beginning to grow weary of his good cousin's prolix recitals, the hounds suddenly gave tongue, and from a sedge-grown pool by the way-side, with solemn wing and harsh boom, rose a bittern.

"Holy St. Peter!" exclaimed the Saint-king, spurring his palfrey, and loosing his famous Peregrine falcon.* William was not slow in following that animated example, and the whole company rode at half speed across the rough forest-land, straining their eyes upon the soaring quarry, and the large wheels of the falcons. Riding thus, with his eyes in the air, Edward was nearly pitched over his palfrey's head, as the animal stopped suddenly, checked by a high gate, set deep in a half embattled wall of brick and rubble. Upon this gate sate, quite unmoved and apathetic, a tall ceorl, or laborer, while behind it was a gazing curious group of men of the same rank, clad in those blue tunics of which our peasant's smock is the successor, and leaning on scythes and flails.

Sour and ominous were the looks they bent upon that Norman cavalcade. The men were at least as well clad as those of the same condition are now; and their robust limbs and ruddy cheeks showed no lack of the fare that supports labor. Indeed, the working man of that day, if not one of the absolute theowes, or slaves, was, physically speaking, better off, perhaps, than he has ever since been in England, more especially if he appertained to some wealthy thegn of pure Saxon lineage, whose very title of lord came to him in his quality of dispenser of bread;† and these men had been ceorls under Harold, son of Godwin, now banished from the land.

"Open the gate, open quick, my merry men," said the gentle Edward (speaking in Saxon, though with a strong foreign accent),

* See note (*b*) at the end.

* The Peregrine hawk built on the rocks of Llandudno, and this breed was celebrated, even to the days of Elizabeth. Burleigh thanks one of the Mostyns for a cast of hawks from Llandudno.

† Hlaf, loaf,—Hlaford, lord, giver of bread; Hleafdian, lady, server of bread.—Verstegan.

after he had recovered his seat, murmured a benediction, and crossed himself three times. The men stirred not.

"No horse tramps the seeds we have sown for Harold the Earl to reap;" said the ceorl doggedly, still seated on the gate. And the group behind him gave a shout of applause.

Moved more than ever he had been known to be before, Edward spurred his steed up to the boor, and lifted his hand. At that signal twenty swords flashed in the air behind, as the Norman nobles spurred to the place. Putting back with one hand his fierce attendants, Edward shook the other at the Saxon. "Knave, knave," he cried, "I would hurt you, if I could!"

There was something in these words, fated to drift down into history, at once ludicrous and touching. The Normans saw them only in the former light, and turned aside to conceal their laughter; the Saxon felt them in the latter, and truer sense, and stood rebuked. That great king, whom he now recognized, with all those drawn swords at his back, could not do him hurt; that king had not the heart to hurt him. The ceorl sprang from the gate, and opened it, bending low.

"Ride first, Count William, my cousin," said the King, calmly.

The Saxon ceorl's eyes glared as he heard the Norman's name uttered in the Norman tongue, but he kept open the gate, and the train passed through, Edward lingering last. Then said the King, in a low voice,—

"Bold man, thou spokest of Harold the Earl and his harvests; knowest thou not that his lands have passed from him, and that he is outlawed, and his harvests are not for the scythes of his ceorls to reap?"

"May it please you, dread Lord and King," replied the Saxon, simply, "these lands that were Harold the Earl's, are now Clapa's, the sixhændman's."

"How is that?" quoth Edward, hastily; "we gave them neither to sixhændman nor to Saxon. All the lands of Harold hereabout were divided amongst sacred abbots and noble chevaliers—Normans all."

"Fulke the Norman had these fair fields, yon orchards and tynen; Fulke sold them to Clapa, the Earl's sixhændman, and what in mancusses and pence Clapa lacked of the price, we, the ceorls of the Earl, made up from our own earnings in the Earl's noble service. And this very day, in token thereof, have we quaffed the bedden-ale.* Wherefore, please God and our Lady, we hold these lands part and parcel with Clapa; and when Earl Harold comes again, as come he will, here at least he will have his own."

Edward, who, despite a singular simplicity of character, which at times seemed to border on imbecility, was by no means wanting in penetration when his attention was fairly roused, changed countenance at this proof of rough and homely affection on the part of these men to his banished earl and brother-in-law. He mused a little while in grave thought, and then said, kindly—

"Well, man, I think not the worse of you for loyal love to your thegn, but there are those who would do so, and I advise you, brotherlike, that ears and nose are in peril if thou talkest thus indiscreetly."

"Steel to steel, and hand to hand," said the Saxon, bluntly, touching the long knife in his leathern belt, "and he who sets gripe on Sexwolf son of Elfhelm, shall pay his weregeld twice over."

"Forewarned, foolish man, thou art forewarned. Peace," said the King; and, shaking his head, he rode on to join the Normans, who now, in a broad field, where the corn sprang green, and which they seemed to delight in wantonly trampling, as they curvetted their steeds to and fro, watched the movements of the bittern and the pursuit of the two falcons.

"A wager, Lord King!" said a prelate, whose strong family likeness to William proclaimed him to be the duke's bold and haughty brother, Odo,† Bishop of Bayeaux; —"a wager. My steed to your palfrey that the Duke's falcon first fixes the bittern."

"Holy father," answered Edward, in that slight change of voice which alone showed

* Bedden-ale. When any man was set up in his estate by the contributions of his friends, those friends were bid to a feast, and the ale so drunk was called the bedden-ale, from bedden, to pray, or to bid. (See BRAND'S *Pop. Antiq.*)

† Herleve (Arlotta), William's mother, married Herluin de Conteville, after the death of Duke Robert, and had by him two sons, Robert Count of Mortain, and Odo, Bishop of Bayeux.—ORD. VITAL, lib. vii.

his displeasure, "these wagers all savor of heathenesse, and our canons forbid them to mone * and priest. Go to, it is naught."

The bishop, who brooked no rebuke, even from his terrible brother, knit his brows, and was about to make no gentle rejoinder, when William, whose profound craft or sagacity was always at watch, lest his followers should displease the King, interposed, and, taking the word out of the prelate's mouth, said—

"Thou reprovest us well, Sir and King; we Normans are too inclined to such levities. And see, your falcon is first in pride of place. By the bones of St. Valery, how nobly he towers! See him cover the bittern!—see him rest on the wing!—Down he swoops! Gallant bird!"

"With his heart split in two on the bittern's bill," said the bishop; and down, rolling one over the other, fell bittern and hawk, while William's Norway falcon, smaller of size than the King's, descended rapidly, and hovered over the two. Both were dead.

"I accept the omen," muttered the gazing Duke; "let the natives destroy each other!" He placed his whistle to his lips, and his falcon flew back to his wrist.

"Now home," said King Edward.

CHAPTER IV.

The royal party entered London by the great bridge which divided Southwark from the capital; and we must pause to gaze a moment on the animated scene which the immemorial thoroughfare presented.

The whole suburb before entering Southwark was rich in orchards and gardens, lying round the detached houses of the wealthier merchants and citizens. Approaching the riverside, to the left, the eye might see the two circular spaces set apart, the one for bear, the other for bull-baiting. To the right, upon a green mound of waste, within sight of the populous bridge, the gleemen were exercising their art. Here one dexterous juggler threw three balls and three knives alternately in the air, catching them one by one as they fell.† There, another was gravely leading a great bear to dance on its hind legs, while his coadjutor kept time with a sort of flute or flageolet. The lazy bystanders, in great concourse, stared and laughed; but the laugh was hushed at the tramp of the Norman steeds; and the famous Count by the King's side, as, with a smiling lip, but observant eye, he rode along, drew all attention from the bear.

On now approaching that bridge which, not many years before, had been the scene of terrible contest between the invading Danes and Ethelred's ally, Olave of Norway,* you might still see, though neglected and already in decay, the double fortifications that had wisely guarded that vista into the city. On both sides of the bridge, which was of wood, were forts, partly of timber, partly of stone, and breastworks, and by the forts a little chapel. The bridge, broad enough to admit two vehicles abreast,† was crowded with passengers, and lively with stalls and booths. Here was the favorite spot of the popular ballad-singer.‡ Here, too, might be seen the swarthy Saracen, with wares from Spain and Afric.§ Here, the German merchant from the Steel-yard swept along on his way to his suburban home. Here, on some holy office, went quick the

* *Mone*, monk.

† Strutt's *Horda*.

* There is an animated description of this "Battle of London Bridge," which gave ample theme to the Scandinavian scalds, in Snorro Sturleson:—

"London Bridge is broken down;
Gold is won and bright renown;
Shields resounding,
War horns sounding,
Hildur shouting in the din,
Arrows singing,
Mail-coats ringing,
Odin makes our Olaf win."

Laing's *Heimskringla*, vol. ii. p. 10.

† Sharon Turner.

‡ Hawkins, vol. ii. p. 94.

§ Doomsday makes mention of the Moors, and the Germans (the Emperor's merchants) that were sojourners or settlers, in London. The Saracens at that time were among the great merchants of the world; Marseilles, Arles, Avignon, Montpellier, Toulouse, were the wonted *etapes* of their active traders. What civilizers, what teachers they were—those same Saracens! How much in 'arms and in arts we owe them! Fathers of the Provençal poetry, they, far more than even the Scandinavian scalds, have influenced the literature of Christian Europe. The most ancient chronicle of the Cid was written in Arabic, a little before the Cid's death, by two of his pages, who were Mussulmen. The medical science of the Moors for six centuries enlightened Europe, and their metaphysics were adopted in nearly all the Christian universities.

muffled monk. Here, the city gallant paused to laugh with the country girl, her basket full of May-boughs and cowslips. In short, all bespoke that activity, whether in business or pastime, which was destined to render that city the mart of the world, and which had already knit the trade of the Anglo-Saxon to the remoter corners of commercial Europe. The deep dark eye of William dwelt admiringly on the bustling groups, on the broad river, and the forest of masts which rose by the indented marge near Belin's gate.* And he to whom, whatever his faults, or rather crimes, to the unfortunate people he not only oppressed but deceived—London at least may yet be grateful, not only for chartered franchise,† but for advancing, in one short vigorous reign, her commerce and wealth, beyond what centuries of Anglo-Saxon domination, with its inherent feebleness, had effected, exclaimed aloud:

"By rood and mass, O dear king, thy lot hath fallen on a goodly heritage!"

"Hem!" said Edward, lazily; "thou knowest not how troublesome these Saxons are. And while thou speakest, lo, in yon shattered walls, built first, they say, by Alfred of holy memory, are the evidences of the Danes. Bethink thee how often they have sailed up this river. How know I but what the next year the raven flag may stream over these waters? Magnus of Denmark hath already claimed my crown as heir to the royalties of Canute, and" (here Edward hesitated), "Godwin and Harold, whom alone of my thegns, Dane and Northmen fear, are far away."

"Miss not them, Edward, my cousin," cried the Duke, in haste. "Send for me if danger threat thee. Ships enow await thy hest in my new port of Cherbourg. And I tell thee this for thy comfort, that were I king of the English, and lord of this river, the citizens of London might sleep from vespers to prime, without fear of the Dane. Never again should the raven flag be seen by this bridge! Never, I swear, by the Splendor Divine!"

Not without purpose spoke William thus stoutly; and he turned on the King those glittering eyes (*micantes oculos*), which the chroniclers have praised and noted. For it was his hope and his aim in this visit, that his cousin Edward should formally promise him that goodly heritage of England. But the King made no rejoinder, and they now neared the end of the bridge.

"What old ruin looms yonder?" * asked William, hiding his disappointment at Edward's silence; "it seemeth the remains of some stately keape, which, by its fashion, I should pronounce Roman."

"Ay!" said Edward, "it is said to have been built by the Romans; and one of the old Lombard freemasons employed on my new palace of Westminster, giveth that, and some others in my domain, the name of the Juillet Tower."

"Those Romans were our masters in all things gallant and wise," said William; "and I predict that, some day or other, on that site, a King of England will re-erect palace and tower. And yon castle towards the west?"

"Is the Tower Palatine, where our predecessors have lodged, and ourself sometimes; but the sweet loneliness of Thorney Isle pleaseth me more now."

Thus talking, they entered London, a rude, dark city, built mainly of timbered houses; streets narrow and winding; windows rarely glazed, but protected chiefly by linen blinds; vistas opening, however, at times into broad spaces, round the various con-

* Billingsgate. See note (*c*) at the end.

† London received a charter from William at the instigation of the Norman Bishop of London; but it probably only confirmed the previous municipal constitution, since it says briefly, "I grant you all to be as law-worthy as ye were in the days of King Edward." The rapid increase, however, of the commercial prosperity and political importance of London after the Conquest, is attested in many chronicles, and becomes strikingly evident even on the surface of history.

* There seems good reason for believing that a keep did stand where the Tower stands, before the Conquest, and that William's edifice spared some of its remains. In the very interesting letter from John Bayford relating to the city of London (*Lel. Collect.* lviii.), the writer, a thorough master of his subject, states, that "the Romans made a public military way, that of Watling Street, from the Tower to Ludgate, in a straight line, at the end of which they built stations or citadels, one of which was where the White Tower now stands." Bayford adds that "when the White Tower was fitted up for the reception of records, there remained many Saxon inscriptions."

vents, where green trees grew up behind low palisades. Tall roods, and holy images, to which we owe the names of existing thoroughfares, (Rood-lane and Lady-lane,*) where the ways crossed, attracted the curious, and detained the pious. Spires there were not then, but blunt cone-headed turrets, pyramidal, denoting the Houses of God, rose often from the low, thatched, and reeded roofs. But every now and then, a scholar's, if not an ordinary, eye could behold the relics of Roman splendor, traces of that elder city which now lies buried under our thoroughfares, and of which, year by year, are dug up the stately skeletons.

Along the Thames still rose, though much mutilated, the wall of Constantine.† Round the humble and barbarous Church of St. Paul's (wherein lay the dust of Sebba, that king of the East Saxons who quitted his throne for the sake of Christ, and of Edward's feeble and luckless father, Ethelred), might be seen, still gigantic in decay, the ruins of the vast temple of Diana.‡ Many a church, and many a convent, pierced their mingled brick and timber work with Roman capital and shaft. Still by the tower, to which was afterwards given the Saracen name of Barbican, were the wrecks of the Roman station, where cohorts watched night and day, in case of fire within or foe without §

In a niche, near the Aldersgate, stood the headless statue of Fortitude, which monks and pilgrims deemed some unknown saint in the old time, and halted to honor. And in the midst of Bishopsgate-street, sate on his desecrated throne a mangled Jupiter, his eagle at his feet. Many a half-converted Dane there lingered, and mistook the Thunderer and the bird for Odin and his hawk. By Leod-gate (The People's gate ‖) still too were seen the arches of one of those mighty aqueducts which the Roman learned from the Etrurian. And close by the Still-yard, occupied by "the Emperor's cheap men" (the German merchants), stood, almost entire, the Roman temple, extant in the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Without the walls, the old Roman vineyards* still put forth their green leaves and crude clusters, in the plains of East Smithfield, in the fields of St. Giles's, and on the site where now stands Hatton Garden. Still massere † and cheapmen chaffered and bargained, at booth and stall, in Mart-lane, where the Romans had bartered before them. With every encroachment on new soil, within the walls and without, urn, vase, weapon, human bones, were shovelled out, and lay disregarded amidst heaps of rubbish.

Not on such evidences of the past civilization looked the practical eye of the Norman Count; not on things, but on men, looked he; and as silently he rode on from street to street, out of those men, stalwart and tall, busy, active, toiling, the Man-Ruler saw the Civilization that was to come.

So, gravely through the small city, and over the bridge that spanned the little river of the Fleet, rode the train along the Strand; to the left, smooth sands; to the right, fair pastures below green holts, thinly studded with houses; over numerous cuts and inlets running into the river, rode they on. The hour and the season were those in which youth enjoyed its holiday, and gay groups resorted to the then ‡ fashionable haunts of the Fountain of Holywell, "streaming forth among glistening pebbles."

So they gained at length the village of Charing, which Edward had lately bestowed on his Abbey of Westminster, and which was now filled with workmen, native and foreign, employed on that edifice and the contiguous palace. Here they loitered awhile at the Mews § (where the hawks were kept), passed by the rude palace of stone and rubble, appropriated to the tributary kings of Scotland ‖—a gift from Edgar to Kenneth—and finally, reaching the inlet of the river, which, winding round the Isle of Thorney (now Westminster), separated the rising church, abbey, and palace, of the Saint-king from the main land, dismounted—and were ferried

* Rude-lane. Lad-lane.—BAYFORD.
† Fitzstephen.
‡ Camden.
§ BAYFORD, *Leland's Collectanea*, p. lviii.
‖ Ludgate (Leod-gate).—VERSTEGAN.

* See note (*d*), at the end.
† *Massere*, merchant, mercer.
‡ Fitzstephen.
§ *Meuse.* Apparently rather a hawk hospital, from *Muta* (Camden). Du Fresne, in his Glossary, says, *Muta* is in French *Le Meue*, and a disease to which the hawk was subject on changing its feathers.
‖ Scotland-yard.—STRYPE.

across * the narrow stream to the broad space round the royal residence.

CHAPTER V.

THE new palace of Edward the Confessor, the palace of Westminster, opened its gates to receive the Saxon King and the Norman Duke, remounting on the margin of the isle, and now riding side by side. And as the Duke glanced from brows, habitually knit, first over the pile, stately though not yet completed, with its long rows of round arched windows, cased by indented fringes and fræt (or tooth) work, its sweep of solid columns with circling cloisters, and its ponderous towers of simple grandeur; then over the groups of courtiers, with close vests, and short mantles and beardless cheeks, that filled up the wide space, to gaze in homage on the renowned guest, his heart swelled within him, and checking his rein, he drew near to his brother of Bayeux, and whispered:—

"Is not this already the court of the Norman? Behold yon nobles and earls, how they mimic our garb! behold the very stones in yon gate, how they range themselves as if carved by the hand of the Norman mason! Verily and indeed, brother, the shadow of the rising sun rests already on these halls."

"Had England no people," said the bishop, "England were yours already. But saw you not, as we rode along, the lowering brows? and heard you not the angry murmurs? The villeins are many, and their hate is strong."

"Strong is the roan I bestride," said the Duke; "but a bold rider curbs it with the steel of the bit, and guides it with the goad of the heel."

And now, as they neared the gate, a band of minstrels in the pay of the Norman touched their instruments, and woke their song—the household song of the Norman—the battle hymn of Roland, the Paladin of Charles the Great. At the first word of the song, the Norman knights and youths, profusely scattered amongst the Normanized Saxons, caught up the lay, and with sparkling eyes, and choral voices, they welcomed the mighty Duke into the palace of the last meek successor of Woden.

By the porch of the inner court the Duke flung himself from his saddle, and held the stirrup for Edward to dismount. The King placed his hand gently on his guest's broad shoulder, and, having somewhat slowly reached the ground, embraced and kissed him in the sight of the gorgeous assemblage; then led him by the hand towards the fair chamber which was set apart for the Duke, and so left him to his attendants.

William, lost in thought, suffered himself to be disrobed in silence; but when Fitzosborne, his favorite confidant and haughtiest baron, who yet deemed himself but honored by personal attendance on his chief, conducted him towards the bath, which adjoined the chamber, he drew back, and wrapping round him more closely the gown of fur that had been thrown over his shoulders, he muttered low,—"Nay, if there be on me yet one speck of English dust, let it rest there!—seizin, Fitzosborne, seizin, of the English land."

Then, waving his hand, he dismissed all his attendants except Fitzosborne, and Rolf, Earl of Hereford,* nephew to Edward, but French on the father's side, and thoroughly in the Duke's councils. Twice the Duke paced the chamber without vouchsafing a word to either, then paused by the round window that overlooked the Thames. The scene was fair; the sun, towards its decline, glittered on numerous small pleasure-boats, which shot to and fro between Westminster and London, or towards the opposite shores of Lambeth. His eye sought eagerly, along the curves of the river, the gray remains of the fabled Tower of Julius, and the walls, gates, and turrets, that rose by the stream, or above the dense mass of silent roofs; then it strained hard to descry the tops of the more distant masts of that infant navy, fostered under Alfred, the far-seeing, for the future civilization of wastes unknown, and the empire of seas untracked.

* The first bridge that connected Thorney Isle with the main-land is said to have been built by Matilda, wife of Henry I.

* We give him that title, which this Norman noble generally bears in the Chronicles, though Palgrave observes that he is rather to be styled Earl of the Magesetan (the Welch Marches).

The Duke breathed hard, and opened and closed the hand which he stretched forth into space as if to grasp the city he beheld. "Rolf," said he abruptly, "thou knowest, no doubt, the wealth of the London traders, one and all; for, *foi de Guillaume*, my *gentil chevalier*, thou art a true Norman, and scentest the smell of gold as a hound the boar!"

Rolf smiled, as if pleased with a compliment which simple men might have deemed, at the best, equivocal, and replied,—

"It is true, my liege; and gramercy, the air of England sharpens the scent; for in this villein and motley country, made up of all races,—Saxon and Fin, Dane and Fleming, Pict and Walloon,—it is not as with us, where the brave man and the pure descent are held chief in honor: here, gold and land are, in truth, name and lordship; even their popular name for their national assembly of the Witan is, 'The Wealthy.'* He who is but a ceorl to-day, let him be rich, and he may be earl to-morrow, marry in king's blood, and rule armies under a gonfanon statelier than a king's; while he whose fathers were ealdermen and princes, if, by force or by fraud, by waste or by largess, he become poor, falls at once into contempt, and out of his state,—sinks into a class they call 'six-hundred men,' in their barbarous tongue, and his children will probably sink still lower, into ceorls. Wherefore gold is the thing here most coveted; and, by St. Michael, the sin is infectious."

William listened to the speech with close attention.

"Good," said he, rubbing slowly the palm of his right hand over the back of the left; "a land all compact with the power of one race, a race of conquering men, as our fathers were, whom nought but cowardice or treason can degrade,—such a land, O Rolf of Hereford, it were hard indeed to subjugate, or decoy, or tame;—"

"So has my Lord the Duke found the Bretons; and so also do I find the Welch upon my marches of Hereford."

"But," continued William, not heeding the interruption, "where wealth is more than blood and race, chiefs may be bribed or menaced; and the multitude—by'r Lady, the multitude are the same in all lands, mighty under valiant and faithful leaders, powerless as sheep without them. But to my question, my gentle Rolf; this London must be rich?"*

"Rich enow," answered Rolf, "to coin into armed men, that should stretch from Rouen to Flanders on the one hand, and Paris on the other."

"In the veins of Matilda, whom thou wooest for wife," said Fitzosborne, apruptly, "flows the blood of Charlemagne. God grant his empire to the children she shall bear thee!"

The Duke bowed his head, and kissed a relic suspended from his throat. Farther sign of approval of his counsellor's words he gave not, but, after a pause, he said,—

"When I depart, Rolf, thou wendest back to thy marches. These Welch are brave and fierce, and shape work enow for thy hands."

"Ay, by my halidame! poor sleep by the side of the beehive you have stricken down."

"Marry, then," said William, "let the Welch prey on Saxon, Saxon on Welch; let neither win too easily. Remember our omens to-day, Welch hawk and Saxon bittern, and over their corpses, Duke William's Norway falcon! Now dress we for the complin† and the banquet."

* Eadigan.—S. TURNER, vol. i. p. 274.

* The comparative wealth of London was indeed considerable. When, in 1018, all the rest of England was taxed to an amount considered stupendous, viz., 71,000 Saxon pounds, London contributed 11,000 pounds besides.

† *Complin*, the second vespers.

BOOK THE SECOND.

LANFRANC THE SCHOLAR.

CHAPTER I.

FOUR meals a day, nor those sparing, were not deemed too extravagant an interpretation of the daily bread for which the Saxon prayed. Four meals a day, from earl to ceorl! "Happy times!" may sigh the descendant of the last, if he read these pages; partly so they were for the ceorl, but not in all things, for never sweet is the food, and never gladdening is the drink, of servitude. Inebriety, the vice of the warlike nations of the North, had not, perhaps, been the pre-eminent excess of the earlier Saxons, while yet the active and fiery Britons, and the subsequent petty wars between the kings of the Heptarchy, enforced on hardy warriors the safety of temperance; but the example of the Danes had been fatal. Those giants of the sea, like all who pass from great vicissitudes of toil and repose, from the tempest to the haven, snatched with full hands every pleasure in their reach. With much that tended permanently to elevate the character of the Saxon, they imparted much for a time to degrade it. The Anglian learned to feast to repletion, and drink to delirium. But such were not the vices of the court of the Confessor. Brought up from his youth in the cloister-camp of the Normans, what he loved in their manners was the abstemious sobriety, and the ceremonial religion, which distinguished those sons of the Scandinavian from all other kindred tribes.

The Norman position in France, indeed, in much resembled that of the Spartan in Greece. He had forced a settlement with scanty numbers in the midst of a subjugated and sullen population, surrounded by jealous and formidable foes. Hence sobriety was a condition of his being, and the policy of the chief lent a willing ear to the lessons of the preacher. Like the Spartan, every Norman of pure race was free and noble; and this consciousness inspired not only that remarkable dignity of mien which Spartan and Norman alike possessed, but also that fastidious self-respect which would have revolted from exhibiting a spectacle of debasement to inferiors. And, lastly, as the paucity of their original numbers, the perils that beset, and the good fortune that attended them, served to render the Spartans the most religious of all the Greeks in their dependence on the Divine aid; so, perhaps, to the same causes may be traced the proverbial piety of the ceremonial Normans; they carried into their new creed something of feudal loyalty to their spiritual protectors; did homage to the Virgin for the lands that she vouchsafed to bestow, and recognized in St. Michael, the chief who conducted their armies.

After hearing the complin vespers in the temporary chapel fitted up in that unfinished abbey of Westminster, which occupied the site of the temple of Apollo,* the King and his guests repaired to their evening meal in the great hall of the palace. Below the dais were ranged three long tables for the knights in William's train, and that flower of the

* CAMDEN.—A church was built out of the ruins of that temple by Sibert, King of the East Saxons; and Canute favored much the small monastery attached to it (originally established by Dunstan for twelve Benedictines), on account of its Abbot Wulnoth, whose society pleased him. The old palace of Canute, in Thorney Isle, had been destroyed by fire.

Saxon nobility who, fond, like all youth, of change and imitation, thronged the court of their Normanized saint, and scorned the rude patriotism of their fathers. But hearts truly English were not there. Yea, many of Godwin's noblest foes sighed for the English-hearted Earl, banished by Norman guile on behalf of English law.

At the oval table on the dais the guests were select and chosen. At the right hand of the King sat William; at the left Odo of Bayeux. Over these three stretched a canopy of cloth of gold; the chairs on which each sate were of metal, richly gilded over, and the arms carved in elaborate arabesques. At this table too was the King's nephew, the Earl of Hereford, and, in right of kinsmanship to the Duke, the Norman's beloved baron and grand seneschal, William Fitzosborne, who, though in Normandy even he sate not at the Duke's table, was, as related to his lord, invited by Edward to his own. No other guests were admitted to this board, so that, save Edward, all were Norman. The dishes were of gold and silver, the cups inlaid with jewels. Before each guest was a knife, with hilt adorned by precious stones, and a napkin fringed with silver. The meats were not placed on the table, but served upon small spits, and between every course a basin of perfumed water was borne round by high-born pages.

No dame graced the festival; for she who should have presided—she, matchless for beauty without pride, piety without asceticism, and learning without pedantry—she, the pale rose of England, loved daughter of Godwin, and loathed wife of Edward, had shared in the fall of her kindred, and had been sent by the meek King, or his fierce counsellors, to an abbey in Hampshire, with the taunt "that it was not meet that the child and sister should enjoy state and pomp, while the sire and brethren ate the bread of the stranger in banishment and disgrace."

But, hungry as were the guests, it was not the custom of that holy court to fall to without due religious ceremonial. The rage for psalm-singing was then at its height in England; psalmody had excluded almost every other description of vocal music; and it is even said that great festivals on certain occasions were preluded by no less an effort of lungs and memory than the entire songs bequeathed to us by King David! This day, however, Hugoline, Edward's Norman chamberlain, had been pleased to abridge the length of the prolix grace, and the company were let off, to Edward's surprise and displeasure, with the curt and unseemly preparation of only nine psalms and one special hymn in honor of some obscure saint to whom the day was dedicated. This performed, the guests resumed their seats, Edward murmuring an apology to William for the strange omission of his chamberlain, and saying thrice to himself, "Naught, naught—very naught."

The mirth languished at the royal table, despite some gay efforts from Rolf, and some hollow attempts at lighthearted cheerfulness from the great Duke, whose eyes, wandering down the table, were endeavoring to distinguish Saxon from Norman, and count how many of the first might already be reckoned in the train of his friends. But at the long tables below, as the feast thickened, and ale, mead, pigment, morat, and wine circled round, the tongue of the Saxon was loosed and the Norman knight lost somewhat of his superb gravity. It was just as what a Danish poet called the "sun of the night" (in other words, the fierce warmth of the wine), had attained its meridian glow, that some slight disturbance at the doors of the hall, without which waited a dense crowd of the poor on whom the fragments of the feast were afterwards to be bestowed, was followed by the entrance of two strangers, for whom the officers appointed to marshal the entertainment made room at the foot of one of the tables. Both these new comers were clad with extreme plainness; one in a dress, though not quite monastic, that of an ecclesiastic of low degree; the other in a long gray mantle and loose gonna, the train of which last was tucked into a broad leathern belt, leaving bare the leggings, which showed limbs of great bulk and sinew, and which were stained by the dust and mire of travel. The first mentioned was slight and small of person; the last was of the height and port of the sons of Anak. The countenance of neither could be perceived, for both had let fall the hood, worn by civilians as by priests

out of doors, more than half way over their faces.

A murmur of great surprise, disdain and resentment, at the intrusion of strangers so attired, circulated round the neighborhood in which they had been placed, checked for a moment by a certain air of respect which the officer had shown towards both, but especially the taller; but breaking out with greater vivacity from the faint restraint, as the tall man unceremoniously stretched across the board, drew towards himself an immense flagon, which (agreeably to the custom of arranging the feast in "messes" of four) had been specially appropriated to Ulf the Dane, Godrith the Saxon, and two young Norman knights akin to the puissant Lord of Grantmesnil,—and having offered it to his comrade, who shook his head, drained it with a gusto that seemed to bespeak him at least no Norman, and wiped his lips boorishly with the sleeve of his huge arm.

"Dainty sir," said one of those Norman knights, William Mallet, of the house of Mallet de Graville,* as he moved as far from the gigantic intruder as the space on the settle would permit, "forgive the observation that you have damaged my mantle, you have grazed my foot, and you have drunk my wine. And vouchsafe, if it so please you, the face of the man who hath done this triple wrong to William Mallet de Graville."

A kind of laugh—for laugh absolute it was not—rattled under the cowl of the tall stranger, as he drew it still closer over his face, with a hand that might have spanned the breast of his interrogator, and he made a gesture as if he did not understand the question addressed to him.

Therewith the Norman knight, bending with demure courtesy across the board to Godrith the Saxon, said,—

"*Pardex*,† but this fair guest and seigneur seemeth to me, noble Godree (whose name I fear my lips do but rudely enounce), of Saxon line and language; our Romance tongue he knoweth not. Pray you, is it the Saxon custom to enter a king's hall so garbed, and drink a knight's wine so mutely?"

Godrith, a young Saxon of considerable rank, but one of the most sedulous of the imitators of the foreign fashions, colored high at the irony in the knight's speech, and turning rudely to the huge guest, who was now causing immense fragments of pasty to vanish under the cavernous cowl, he said in his native tongue, though with a lisp as if unfamiliar to him,—

"If thou beest Saxon, shame us not with thy ceorlish manners; crave pardon of this Norman thegn, who will doubtless yield it to thee in pity. Uncover thy face—and—"

Here the Saxon's rebuke was interrupted; for, one of the servitors, just then approaching Godrith's side with a spit, elegantly caparisoned with some score of plump larks, the unmannerly giant stretched out his arm within an inch of the Saxon's startled nose, and possessed himself of larks, broche, and all. He drew off two, which he placed on his friend's platter, despite all dissuasive gesticulations, and deposited the rest upon his own. The young banqueters gazed upon the spectacle in wrath too full for words.

At last spoke Mallet de Graville, with an envious eye upon the larks—for though a Norman was not gluttonous, he was epicurean —"Certes, and *foi de chevalier!* a man must go into strange parts if he wish to see monsters; but we are fortunate people" (and he turned to his Norman friend Aymer, Quen* or Count, D'Evreux), "that we have discovered Polyphemus without going so far as Ulysses;" and pointing to the hooded giant, he quoted, appropriately enough,

"Monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum."

The giant continued to devour his larks, as complacently as the ogre to whom he was likened might have devoured the Greeks in his cave. But his fellow-intruder seemed agitated by the sound of the Latin; he lifted up his head suddenly, and showed lips glistening with white even teeth, and curved into

* See note to PLUQUET'S *Roman de Rou*, p. 285.
N.B.—Whenever the *Roman de Rou* is quoted in these pages, it is from the excellent edition of M. Pluquet.

† *Pardex*, or *Parde*, corresponding to the modern French expletive, *pardie*.

* *Quen*, or rather *Quens;* synonymous with *Count* in the Norman Chronicles. Earl Godwin is strangely styled by Wace, *Quens Gwine*.

an approving smile, while he said: "*Bene, mi fili! bene, lepidissime, poetæ verba, in militis ore, non indecora sonant.*"*

The young Norman stared at the speaker, and replied, in the same tone of grave affectation,—"Courteous Sir! the approbation of an ecclesiastic so eminent as I take you to be, from the modesty with which you conceal your greatness, cannot fail to draw upon me the envy of my English friends; who are accustomed to swear *in verba magistri*, only for *verba* they learnedly substitute *vina*."

"You are pleasant, Sire Mallet," said Godrith, reddening; "but I know well that Latin is only fit for monks and shavelings; and little enow even *they* have to boast of."

The Norman's lip curled in disdain. "Latin!—O, Godree, *bien aimé!*—Latin is the tongue of Cæsars and senators, *fortes* conquerors and *preux* chevaliers. Knowest thou not that Duke William the dauntless at eight years old had the Comments of Julius Cæsar by heart?—and that it is his saying, that 'a king without letters is a crowned ass?'† When the king is an ass, asinine are his subjects. Wherefore go to school, speak respectfully of thy betters, the monks and shavelings, who with us are often brave captains and sage councillors,—and learn that a full head makes a weighty hand."

"Thy name, young knight?" said the ecclesiastic, in Norman French, though with a slight foreign accent.

"I can give it thee," said the giant, speaking aloud for the first time, in the same language, and in a rough voice, which a quick ear might have detected as disguised,—"I can describe to thee name, birth, and quality. By name, this youth is Guillaume Mallet, sometimes styled De Graville, because our Norman gentilhommes, forsooth, must always now have a 'de' tacked to their names; nevertheless he hath no other right to the seigneurie of Graville, which appertains to the head of his house, than may be conferred by an old tower on one corner of the demesnes so designated, with lands that would feed one horse and two villeins—if they were not in pawn to a Jew for moneys to buy velvet mantelines and a chain of gold. By birth, he comes from Mallet,* a bold Norwegian in the fleet of Rou the Sea-king; his mother was a Frank woman, from whom he inherits his best possessions—videlicet, a shrewd wit and a railing tongue. His qualities are abstinence, for he eateth nowhere save at the cost of another—some Latin, for he was meant for a monk, because he seemed too slight of frame for a warrior—some courage, for in spite of his frame he slew three Burgundians with his own hand; and Duke William, among other foolish acts, spoilt a friar *sans tache*, by making a knight *sans terre;* and for the rest——"

"And for the rest," interrupted the Sire de Graville, turning white with wrath, but speaking in a low repressed voice, "were it not that Duke William sate yonder, thou shouldst have six inches of cold steel in thy huge carcase to digest thy stolen dinner, and silence thy unmannerly tongue.—"

"For the rest," continued the giant indifferently, and as if he had not heard the interruption; "for the rest, he only resembles Achilles, in being *impiger*, *iracundus*. Big men can quote Latin as well as little ones, Messire Mallet the *beau clerc!*"

Mallet's hand was on his dagger; and his eye dilated like that of the panther before he springs; but fortunately, at that moment, the deep sonorous voice of William, accustomed to send its sounds down the ranks of an army, rolled clear through the assemblage, though pitched little above its ordinary key:—

"Fair is your feast, and bright your wine, Sir King and brother mine! But I miss here what king and knight hold as the salt of the feast and the perfume to the wine: the lay of the minstrel. Beshrew me, but both Saxon and Norman are of kindred stock, and love to hear in hall and bower the deeds of their northern fathers. Crave I therefore from your gleemen, or harpers, some song of the olden time!"

A murmur of applause went through the Norman part of the assembly; the Saxons looked up; and some of the more practised courtiers sighed wearily, for they knew well

* "Good, good, pleasant son,—the words of the poet sound gracefully on the lips of the knight."

† A sentiment variously assigned to William and to his son Henry the Beau Clerc.

* Mallet is a genuine Scandinavian name to this day.

what ditties alone were in favor with the saintly Edward.

The low voice of the King in reply was not heard, but those habituated to read his countenance in its very faint varieties of expression, might have seen that it conveyed reproof; and its purport soon became practically known, when a lugubrious prelude was heard from a quarter of the hall, in which sate certain ghost-like musicians in white robes—white as winding sheets; and forthwith a dolorous and dirgelike voice chaunted a long, and most tedious recital of the miracles and martyrdom of some early saint. So monotonous was the chaunt, that its effect soon became visible in a general drowsiness. And when Edward, who alone listened with attentive delight, turned towards the close to gather sympathizing admiration from his distinguished guests, he saw his nephew yawning as if his jaw were dislocated—the Bishop of Bayeux, with his well-ringed fingers interlaced and resting on his stomach, fast asleep—Fitzosborne's half-shaven head balancing to and fro with many an uneasy start—and William, wide awake indeed, but with eyes fixed on vacant space, and his soul far away from the gridiron to which (all other saints be praised!) the saint of the ballad had at last happily arrived.

"A comforting and salutary recital, Count William," said the King.

The Duke started from his reverie, and bowed his head: then said rather abruptly, "Is not yon blazon that of King Alfred?"

"Yea. Wherefore!"

"Hem! Matilda of Flanders is in direct descent from Alfred: it is a name and a line the Saxons yet honor!"

"Surely, yes; Alfred was a great man, and reformed the Psalmster," replied Edward.

The dirge ceased, but so benumbing had been its effect, that the torpor it created, did not subside with the cause. There was a dead and funereal silence throughout the spacious hall, when suddenly, loudly, mightily, as the blast of the trumpet upon the hush of the grave, rose a single voice. All started—all turned—all looked to one direction; and they saw, that the great voice pealed from the farthest end of the hall. From under his gown the gigantic stranger had drawn a small three-stringed instrument—somewhat resembling the modern lute—and thus he sang,—

THE BALLAD OF ROU.*

I.

From Blois to Senlis, wave by wave, roll'd on the Norman flood,
And Frank on Frank went drifting down the weltering tide of blood;
There was not left in all the land a castle wall to fire,
And not a wife but wailed a lord, a child but mourned a sire.
To Charles the king, the mitred monks, the mailèd barons flew,
While, shaking earth, behind them strode the thunder march of Rou.

II.

"O King," then cried those barons bold, "in vain are mace and mail,
We fall before the Norman axe, as corn before the hail."
"And vainly," cried the pious monks, "by Mary's shrine we kneel,
For prayers, like arrows, glance aside, against the Norman steel."
The barons groaned, the shavelings wept, while near and nearer drew,
As death-birds round their scented feast, the raven flags of Rou.

III.

Then said King Charles, "Where thousands fail, what king can stand alone?
The strength of kings is in the men that gather round the throne.
When war dismays my barons bold, 'tis time for war to cease;
When Heaven forsakes my pious monks, the will of Heaven is peace.
Go forth my monks, with mass and rood the Norman camp unto,
And to the fold, with shepherd crook, entice this grisly Rou.

IV.

"I'll give him all the ocean coast, from Michael Mount to Eure,
And Gille, my child, shall be his bride, to bind him fast and sure;
Let him but kiss the Christian cross, and sheathe the heathen sword,
And hold the lands I cannot keep, a fief from Charles his lord."
Forth went the pastors of the Church, the Shepherd's work to do,
And wrap the golden fleece around the tiger loins of Rou.

* Rou—the name given by the French to Rollo, or Rolf-ganger, the founder of the Norman settlement.

V.

Psalm-chanting came the shaven monks, within the
camp of dread;
Amidst his warriors, Norman Rou, stood taller by
the head.
Out spoke the Frank Archbishop then, a priest de-
vout and sage,
"When peace and plenty wait thy word, what need
of war and rage?
Why waste a land as fair as aught beneath the arch
of blue,
Which might be thine to sow and reap?—Thus saith
the King to Rou:

VI.

"'I'll give thee all the ocean coast, from Michael
Mount to Eure,
And Gille, my fairest child, as bride, to bind thee
fast and sure;
If thou but kneel to Christ our God, and sheathe thy
paynim sword,
And hold thy land, the Church's son, a fief from
Charles thy lord.'"
The Norman on his warriors looked—to counsel
they withdrew;
The saints took pity on the Franks, and moved the
soul of Rou.

VII.

So back he strode and thus he spoke, to that Arch-
bishop meek:
"I take the land thy king bestows from Eure to
Michael-peak,
I take the maid, or foul or fair, a bargain with the
coast,
And for thy creed, a sea-king's gods are those that
give the most.
So hie thee back, and tell thy chief to make his
proffer true,
And he shall find a docile son, and ye a saint in
Rou."

VIII.

So o'er the border stream of Epte came Rou the
Norman, where,
Begirt with barons, sat the King, enthroned at green
St. Clair;
He placed his hand in Charles's hand,—loud shouted
all the throng,
But tears were in King Charles's eyes—the grip of
Rou was strong.
"Now kiss the foot," the Bishop said, "that homage
still is due;"
Then dark the frown and stern the smile of that
grim convert, Rou.

IX.

He takes the foot, as if the foot to slavish lips to
bring;
The Normans scowl; he tilts the throne, and back-
ward falls the King.
Loud laugh the joyous Norman men—pale stare the
Franks aghast;
And Rou lifts up his head as from the wind springs
up the mast:
"I said I would adore a God, but not a mortal too;
The foot that fled before a foe let cowards kiss!"
said Rou.

No words can express the excitement which this rough minstrelsy—marred as it is by our poor translation from the Romance-tongue in which it was chanted—produced amongst the Norman guests; less perhaps, indeed, the song itself, than the recognition of the minstrel; and as he closed, from more than a hundred voices came the loud murmur, only subdued from a shout by the royal presence, "Taillefer, our Norman Taillefer!"

"By our joint saint, Peter, my cousin the King," exclaimed William, after a frank cordial laugh; "well I wot, no tongue less free than my warrior minstrel's could have so shocked our ears. Excuse his bold theme, for the sake of his bold heart, I pray thee; and since I know well" (here the Duke's face grew grave and anxious) "that nought save urgent and weighty news from my stormy realm could have brought over this rhyming petrel, permit the officer behind me to lead hither a bird, I fear, of omen as well as of song."

"Whatever pleases thee, pleases me," said Edward, drily; and he gave the order to the attendant. In a few moments, up the space in the hall, between either table, came the large stride of the famous minstrel, preceded by the officer, and followed by the ecclesiastic. The hoods of both were now thrown back, and discovered countenances in strange contrast, but each equally worthy of the attention it provoked. The face of the minstrel was open and sunny as the day; and that of the priest, dark and close as night. Thick curls of deep auburn (the most common color for the locks of the Norman) wreathed in careless disorder round Taillefer's massive unwrinkled brow. His eye, of light hazel, was bold and joyous; mirth, though sarcastic and sly, mantled round his lips. His whole presence was at once engaging and heroic.

On the other hand, the priest's cheek was dark and sallow; his features singularly delicate and refined; his forehead high, but somewhat narrow, and crossed with lines of thought; his mein composed, modest, but not without calm self-confidence. Amongst that assembly of soldiers, noiseless, self-collected, and conscious of his surpassing power over swords and mail, moved the SCHOLAR.

William's keen eye rested on the priest with some surprise, not unmixed with pride and ire; but first addressing Taillefer, who now gained the foot of the dais, he said, with a familiarity almost fond—

"Now, by're Lady, if thou bringest not ill news, thy gay face, man, is pleasanter to mine eyes than thy rough song to my ears. Kneel, Taillefer, kneel to King Edward, and with more address, rogue, than our unlucky countryman to King Charles."

But Edward, as ill-liking the form of the giant as the subject of his lay, said, pushing back his seat as far as he could—

"Nay, nay, we excuse thee, we excuse thee, tall man." Nevertheless, the minstrel still knelt, and so, with a look of profound humility, did the priest. Then both slowly rose, and at a sign from the Duke, passed to the other side of the table, standing behind Fitzosborne's chair.

"Clerk," said William, eyeing deliberately the sallow face of the ecclesiastic; "I know thee of old; and if the Church have sent me an envoy, *per la resplendar Dé*, it should have sent me at least an abbot."

"*Hein, Hein!*" said Taillefer, bluntly; "vex not my *bon camarade*, Count of the Normans. Gramercy, thou wilt welcome him, peradventure, better than me; for the singer tells but of discord, and the sage may restore the harmony."

"Ha!" said the Duke, and the frown fell so dark over his eyes that the last seemed only visible by two sparks of fire. "I guess, my proud Vavasours are mutinous. Retire, thou and thy comrade. Await me in my chamber. The feast shall not flag in London because the wind blows a gale in Rouen."

The two envoys, since so they seemed, bowed in silence and withdrew.

"Nought of ill-tidings, I trust," said Edward, who had not listened to the whispered communications that had passed between the Duke and his subjects. "No schism in thy Church? The clerk seemed a peaceful man, and a humble."

"An there were schism in my Church," said the fiery Duke, "my brother of Bayeux would settle it by arguments as close as the gap between cord and throttle."

"Ah! thou art, doubtless, well read in the canons, holy Odo!" said the King, turning to the Bishop with more respect than he had yet evinced towards that gentle prelate.

"Canons, yes, Seigneur, I draw them up myself for my flock conformably with such interpretations of the Roman Church as suit best with the Norman realm: and woe to deacon, monk, or abbot, who chooses to misconstrue them." *

The Bishop looked so truculent and menacing, while his fancy thus conjured up the possibility of heretical dissent, that Edward shrank from him as he had done from Taillefer; and in a few minutes after, on exchange of signals between himself and the Duke, who, impatient to escape, was too stately to testify that desire, the retirement of the royal party broke up the banquet; save, indeed, that a few of the elder Saxons, and more incorrigible Danes, still steadily kept their seats, and were finally dislodged from their later settlements on the stone floors, to find themselves, at dawn, carefully propped in a row against the outer walls of the palace, with their patient attendants, holding links, and gazing on their masters with stolid envy, if not of the repose at least of the drugs that had caused it.

CHAPTER II.

"And now," said William, reclining on a long and narrow couch, with raised carved work all round it like a box (the approved fashion of a bed in those days), "now, Sire Taillefer—thy news."

There were then in the Duke's chamber, the Count Fitzosborne, Lord of Breteuil, surnamed "the Proud Spirit"—who, with great dignity, was holding before the brazier, the ample tunic of linen (called *dormitorium* in the Latin of that time, and night-rail in the Saxon tongue), in which his lord was to robe his formidable limbs for repose,†—

* Pious severity to the heterodox was a Norman virtue. William of Poictiers says of William, "One knows with what zeal he pursued and exterminated those who thought differently;" i. e. on transubstantiation. But the wise Norman, while flattering the tastes of the Roman Pontiff in such matters, took special care to preserve the independence of his Church from any undue dictation.

† A few generations later this comfortable and decent fashion of night-gear was abandoned; and

Taillefer, who stood erect before the Duke as a Roman sentry at his post,—and the ecclesiastic, a little apart, with arms gathered under his gown, and his bright dark eyes fixed on the ground.

"High and puissant my liege," then said Taillefer, gravely, and with a shade of sympathy on his large face, "my news is such as is best told briefly: Bunaz, Count d'Eu and decendant of Richard Sanspeur, hath raised the standard of revolt."

"Go on," said the Duke, clenching his hand.

"Henry, King of the French, is treating with the rebel, and stirring up mutiny in thy realm, and pretenders to thy throne."

"Ha!" said the Duke, and his lip quivered; "this is not all."

"No, my liege! and the worst is to come. Thy uncle Mauger, knowing that thy heart is bent on thy speedy nuptials with the high and noble damsel, Matilda of Flanders, has broken out again in thine absence—is preaching against thee in hall and from pulpit. He declares that such espousals are incestuous, both as within the forbidden degrees, and inasmuch as Adele, the lady's mother, was betrothed to thine uncle Richard; and Mauger menaces excommunication if my liege pursues his suit!* So troubled is the realm, that I, waiting not for debate in Council, and fearing sinister ambassage if I did so, took ship from thy port of Cherburg, and have not flagged rein, and scarce broken bread, till I could say to the heir of Rolf the Founder—Save thy realm from the men of mail, and thy bride from the knaves in serge."

"Ho, ho!" cried William; then bursting forth in full wrath, as he sprang from the couch, "Hearest thou this, Lord Seneschal? Seven years, the probation of the patriarch, have I wooed and waited; and lo, in the seventh, does a proud priest say to me, 'Wrench the love from thy heart-strings!' —Excommunicate *me*—ME—William, the son of Robert the Devil! Ha, by God's Splendor, Mauger shall live to wish the father stood, in the foul fiend's true likeness, by his side, rather than brave the bent brow of the son!"

"Dread my lord," said Fitzosborne, desisting from his employ, and rising to his feet; "thou knowest that I am thy true friend and leal knight; thou knowest how I have aided thee in this marriage with the lady of Flanders, and how gravely I think that what pleases thy fancy will guard thy realm; but rather than brave the order of the Church, and the ban of the Pope, I would see thee wed to the poorest virgin in Normandy."

William, who had been pacing the room, like an enraged lion in his den, halted in amaze at this bold speech.

"This from thee, William Fitzosborne!—from thee! I tell thee, that if all the priests in Christendom, and all the barons in France, stood between me and my bride, I would hew my way through the midst. Foes invade my realm—let them; princes conspire against me—I smile in scorn; subjects mutiny—this strong hand can punish, or this large heart can forgive. All these are the dangers which he who governs men should prepare to meet; but man has a right to his love, as the stag to his hind. And he who wrongs me here, is foe and traitor to me, not as Norman Duke but as human being. Look to it—thou and thy proud barons, look to it!"

"Proud may thy barons be," said Fitzosborne, reddening, and with a brow that quailed not before his lord's; "for they are the sons of those who carved out the realm of the Norman, and owned in Rou but the feudal chief of free warriors; vassals are not villeins. And that which we hold our duty —whether to Church or chief—that, Duke William, thy proud barons will doubtless do; nor less, believe me, for threats which, braved in discharge of duty and defence of freedom, we hold as air."

The Duke gazed on his haughty subject

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our forefathers, Saxon and Norman, went to bed *in puris naturalibus*, like the Laplanders.

* Most of the chroniclers merely state the parentage within the forbidden degrees as the obstacle to William's marriage with Matilda; but the betrothal or rather nuptials of her mother Adele with Richard III. (though never consummated), appears to have been the true canonical objection.—See note to Wace, p. 27. Nevertheless, Matilda's mother Adele, stood in the relation of aunt to William, as widow of his father's elder brother, "an affinity," as is observed by a writer in the "Archæologia," "quite near enough to account for, if not to justify, the interference of the Church."—*Arch.* vol. xxxii. p. 109.

with an eye in which a meaner spirit might have seen its doom. The veins in his broad temples swelled like cords, and a light foam gathered round his quivering lips. But fiery and fearless as William was, not less was he sagacious and profound. In that one man he saw the representative of that superb and matchless chivalry—that race of races—those men of men, in whom the brave acknowledge the highest example of valiant deeds, and the free the manliest assertion of noble thoughts,* since the day when the last Athenian covered his head with his mantle, and mutely died; and far from being the most stubborn against his will, it was to Fitzosborne's paramount influence with the council, that he had often owed their submission to his wishes, and their contributions to his wars.

In the very tempest of his wrath, he felt that the blow he longed to strike on that bold head would shiver his ducal throne to the dust. He felt too, that awful indeed was that power of the Church which could thus turn against him the heart of his truest knight: and he began (for with all his outward frankness his temper was suspicious) to wrong the great-souled noble by the thought that he might already be won over by the enemies whom Mauger had arrayed against his nuptials. Therefore, with one of those rare and mighty efforts of that dissimulation which debased his character, but achieved his fortunes, he cleared his brow of its dark cloud, and said in a low voice, that was not without its pathos,—

"Had an angel from heaven forewarned me that William Fitzosborne would speak thus to his kinsman and brother in arms, in the hour of need and the agony of passion, I would have disbelieved him. Let it pass——"

But ere the last word was out of his lips, Fitzosborne had fallen on his knees before the Duke, and, clasping his hand, exclaimed, while the tears rolled down his swarthy cheek, "Pardon, pardon, my liege! when thou speakest thus my heart melts. What thou willest, that will I! Church or Pope, no matter. Send me to Flanders; I will bring back thy bride."

The slight smile that curved William's lip, showed that he was scarce worthy of that sublime weakness in his friend. But he cordially pressed the hand that grasped his own, and said, "Rise; thus should brother speak to brother." Then—for his wrath was only concealed, not stifled, and yearned for its vent—his eye fell upon the delicate and thoughtful face of the priest, who had watched this short and stormy conference in profound silence, despite Taillefer's whispers to him to interrupt the dispute. "So, priest," he said, "I remember me that when Mauger before let loose his rebellious tongue thou didst lend thy pedant learning to eke out his brainless treason. Methought that I then banished thee my realm?"

"Not so, Count and Seigneur," answered the ecclesiastic, with a grave but arch smile on his lip; "let me remind thee, that to speed me back to my native land thou didst graciously send me a horse, halting on three legs, and all lame on the fourth. Thus mounted, I met thee on my road. I saluted thee; so did the beast, for his head well nigh touched the ground. Whereon I did ask thee, in a Latin play of words, to give me at least a quadruped, not a tripod, for my journey.* Gracious, even in ire, and with relenting laugh, was thine answer. My liege, thy words implied banishment—thy laughter, pardon. So I stayed."

Despite his wrath, William could scarcely repress a smile; but recollecting himself, he replied, more gravely, "Peace with this

* It might be easy to show, were this the place, that though the Saxons never lost their love of liberty, yet that the victories which gradually regained the liberty from the gripe of the Anglo-Norman kings, were achieved by the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. And even to this day, the few rare descendants of that race (whatever their political faction), will generally exhibit that impatience of despotic influence, and that disdain of corruption, which characterize the homely bonders of Norway, in whom we may still recognize the sturdy likeness of their fathers; while it is also remarkable that the modern inhabitants of those portions of the kingdom originally peopled by their kindred Danes, are, irrespective of mere party divisions, noted for their intolerance of all oppression, and their resolute independence of character; to wit, Yorkshire, Norfolk, Cumberland, and large districts in the Scottish lowlands.

* *Ex pervetusto codice, MS. Chron. Bec. in Vit. Lanfranc*, quoted in the "Archæologia," vol. xxxii. p. 109. The joke, which is very poor, seems to have turned upon *pede* and *quadrupede;* it is a little altered in the text.

levity, priest. Doubtless, thou art the envoy from this scrupulous Mauger, or some other of my gentle clergy; and thou comest, as doubtless, with soft words, and whining homilies. It is in vain. I hold the Church in holy reverence; the pontiff knows it. But Matilda of Flanders I have wooed; and Matilda of Flanders shall sit by my side in the halls of Rouen, or on the deck of my war-ship, till it anchors on a land worthy to yield a new domain to the son of the Sea-king."

"In the halls of Rouen—and it may be on the throne of England—shall Matilda reign by the side of William," said the priest, in a clear, low, and emphatic voice; "and it was to tell my lord the Duke that I repent me of my first unconsidered obeisance to Mauger as my spiritual superior; that since then I have myself examined canon and precedent; and though the letter of the law be against thy spousals, it comes precisely under the category of those alliances to which the fathers of the Church accord dispensation:—it is to tell thee this, that I, plain Doctor of Laws and priest of Pavia, have crossed the seas."

"Ha Rou!—Ha Rou!" cried Taillefer, with his usual bluffness, and laughing with great glee, "why wouldst thou not listen to me, monseigneur?"

"If thou deceivest me not," said William, in surprise, "and thou canst make good thy words, no prelate in Neustria, save Odo of Bayeux, shall lift his head high as thine." And here William, deeply versed in the science of men, bent his eyes keenly upon the unchanging and earnest face of the speaker. "Ah," he burst out, as if satisfied with the survey, "and my mind tells me that thou speakest not thus boldly and calmly without ground sufficient. Man, I like thee. Thy name? I forget it."

"Lanfranc of Pavia, please you my lord; called sometimes 'Lafranc the Scholar' in thy cloister of Bec. Nor misdeem me, that I, humble, unmitred priest, should be thus bold. In birth I am noble, and my kindred stand near to the grace of our ghostly pontiff; to the pontiff I myself am not unknown. Did I desire honors, in Italy I might seek them; it is not so. I crave no guerdon for the service I proffer; none but this—leisure and books in the Convent of Bec."

"Sit down—nay, sit, man," said William, greatly interested, but still suspicious. "One riddle only I ask thee to solve, before I give thee all my trust, and place my very heart in thy hands. Why, if thou desirest not rewards, shouldst thou thus care to serve me—thou, a foreigner?"

A light, brilliant and calm, shone in the eyes of the scholar, and a blush spread over his pale cheeks.

"My Lord Prince, I will answer in plain words. But first permit *me* to be the questioner."

The priest turned towards Fitzosborne, who had seated himself on a stool at William's feet, and, leaning his chin on his hand, listened to the ecclesiastic, not more with devotion to his calling, than wonder at the influence one so obscure was irresistibly gaining over his own martial spirit, and William's iron craft.

"Lovest thou not, William Lord of Breteuil, lovest thou not fame for the sake of fame?"

"*Sur mon âme*—yes!" said the Baron.

"And thou, Taillefer the minstrel, lovest thou not song for the sake of song?"

"For song alone," replied the mighty minstrel. "More gold in one ringing rhyme than in all the coffers of Christendom."

"And marvellest thou, reader of men's hearts," said the scholar, turning once more to William, "that the student loves knowledge for the sake of knowledge? Born of high race, poor in purse, and slight of thews, betimes I found wealth in books, and drew strength from lore. I heard of the Count of Rouen and the Normans, as a prince of small domain, with a measureless spirit, a lover of letters, and a captain in war. I came to thy duchy, I noted its subjects and its prince, and the words of Themistocles rang in my ear: 'I cannot play the lute, but I can make a small state great.' I felt an interest in thy strenuous and troubled career. I believe that knowledge, to spread amongst the nations, must first find a nursery in the brain of kings; and I saw in the deed-doer, the agent of the thinker.

"In those espousals, on which with untiring obstinacy thy heart is set, I might sympathize with thee; perchance"—(here a melancholy smile flitted over the student's pale

lips), "perchance even as a lover: priest though I be now, and dead to human love, once I loved, and I know what it is to strive in hope, and to waste in despair. But my sympathy, I own, was more given to the prince than to the lover. It was natural that I, priest and foreigner, should obey at first the orders of Mauger, archprelate and spiritual chief, and the more so as the law was with him; but when I resolved to stay, despite thy sentence which banished me, I resolved to aid thee; for if with Mauger was the dead law, with thee was the living cause of man. Duke William, on thy nuptials with Matilda of Flanders rests thy duchy—rest, perchance, the mightier sceptres that are yet to come. Thy title disputed, thy principality new and unestablished, thou, above all men, must link thy new race with the ancient line of kings and kaisars. Matilda is the descendant of Charlemagne and Alfred. Thy realm is insecure as long as France undermines it with plots, and threatens it with arms. Marry the daughter of Baldwin—and thy wife is the niece of Henry of France—thine enemy becomes thy kinsman, and must, perforce, be thine ally. This is not all; it were strange, looking round this disordered royalty of England—a childless king, who loves thee better than his own blood; a divided nobility, already adopting the fashions of the stranger, and accustomed to shift their faith from Saxon to Dane, and Dane to Saxon; a people that has respect indeed for brave chiefs, but, seeing new men rise daily from new houses, has no reverence for ancient lines and hereditary names; with a vast mass of villeins or slaves that have no interest in the land or its rulers; strange, seeing all this, if thy day-dreams have not also beheld a Norman sovereign on the throne of Saxon England. And thy marriage with the descendant of the best and most beloved prince that ever ruled these realms, if it does not give thee a title to the land, may help to conciliate its affections, and to fix thy posterity in the halls of their mother's kin. Have I said eno' to prove why, for the sake of nations, it were wise for the pontiff to stretch the harsh girths of the law? why I might be enabled to prove to the Court of Rome the policy of conciliating the love, and strengthening the hands, of the Norman Count, who may so become the main prop of Christendom? Yea, have I said eno' to prove that the humble clerk can look on mundane matters with the eye of a man who can make small states great?"

William remained speechless—his hot blood thrilled with a half superstitious awe; so thoroughly had this obscure Lombard divined, detailed all the intricate meshes of that policy with which he himself had interwoven his pertinacious affection for the Flemish princess, that it seemed to him as if he listened to the echo of his own heart, or heard from a soothsayer the voice of his most secret thoughts.

The priest continued:—

"Wherefore, thus considering, I said to myself, Now has the time come, Lanfranc the Lombard, to prove to thee whether thy self-boastings have been a vain deceit, or whether, in this age of iron and amidst this lust of gold, thou, the penniless and the feeble, canst make knowledge and wit of more avail to the destinies of kings than armed men and filled treasuries. I believe in that power. I am ready for the test. Pause, judge from what the Lord of Breteuil hath said to thee, what will be the defection of thy lords if the Pope confirm the threatened excommunication of thine uncle? Thine armies will rot from thee; thy treasures will be like dry leaves in thy coffers; the Duke of Bretagne will claim thy duchy as the legitimate heir of thy forefathers; the Duke of Burgundy will league with the King of France, and march on thy faithless legions under the banner of the Church. The handwriting is on the walls, and thy sceptre and thy crown will pass away."

William set his teeth firmly, and breathed hard.

"But send me to Rome, thy delegate, and the thunder of Mauger shall fall powerless. Marry Matilda, bring her to thy halls, place her on thy throne, laugh to scorn the interdict of thy traitor uncle, and rest assured that the Pope shall send thee his dispensation to thy spousals, and his benison on thy marriage-bed. And when this be done, Duke William, give me not abbacies and prelacies; multiply books, and stablish schools, and bid thy servant found the

royalty of knowledge, as thou shalt found the sovereignty of war."

The Duke, transported from himself, leaped up and embraced the priest with his vast arms; he kissed his cheeks, he kissed his forehead, as, in those days, king kissed king with "the kiss of peace."

"Lanfranc of Pavia," he cried, "whether thou succeed or fail, thou hast my love and gratitude evermore. As thou speakest, would I have spoken, had I been born, framed and reared as thou. And, verily, when I hear thee, I blush for the boasts of my barbarous pride, that no man can wield my mace, or bend my bow. Poor is the strength of body—a web of law can entangle it, and a word from a priest's mouth can palsy. But thou!—let me look at thee."

William gazed on the pale face; from head to foot he scanned the delicate, slender form, and then turning away, he said to Fitzosborne,—

"Thou, whose mailed hand hath fell'd a war-steed, art thou not ashamed of thyself? The day is coming, I see it afar, when these slight men shall set their feet upon our corslets."

He paused as if in thought, again paced the room, and stopped before the crucifix, and image of the Virgin, which stood in a niche near the bed head.

"Right, noble prince," said the priest's low voice. "Pause there for a solution to all enigmas; there view the symbol of all-enduring power; there, learn its ends below—comprehend the account it must yield above. To your thoughts and your prayers we leave you."

He took the stalwart arm of Taillefer, as he spoke, and, with a grave obeisance to Fitzosborne, left the chamber.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning William was long closeted alone with Lanfranc,—that man, among the most remarkable of his age, of whom it was said, that "to comprehend the extent of his talents, one must be Herodian in grammar, Aristotle in dialectics, Cicero in rhetoric, Augustine and Jerome in Scriptural lore," *—and ere the noon the Duke's gallant and princely train were ordered to be in readiness for return home.

The crowd in the broad space, and the citizens from their boats in the river, gazed on the knights and steeds of that gorgeous company, already drawn up and awaiting without the open gates the sound of the trumpets that should announce the Duke's departure. Before the hall-door in the inner court were his own men. The snow-white steed of Odo; the alezan of Fitzosborne; and, to the marvel of all, a small palfrey plainly caparisoned. What did that palfrey amid those steeds?—the steeds themselves seemed to chafe at the companionship; the Duke's charger pricked up his ears and snorted; the Lord of Breteuil's alezan kicked out, as the poor nag humbly drew near to make acquaintance; and the prelate's white barb, with red vicious eye, and ears laid down, ran fiercely at the low-bred intruder, with difficulty reined in by the squires, who shared the beast's amaze and resentment.

Meanwhile the Duke thoughtfully took his way to Edward's apartments. In the anteroom were many monks and many knights; but conspicuous amongst them all was a tall and stately veteran, leaning on a great two-handed sword, and whose dress and fashion of beard were those of the last generation, the men who had fought with Canute the Great or Edmund Ironsides. So grand was the old man's aspect, and so did he contrast in appearance the narrow garb and shaven chins of those around, that the Duke was roused from his reverie at the sight, and marvelling why one, evidently a chief of high rank, had neither graced the banquet in his honor, nor been presented to his notice, he turned to the Earl of Hereford, who approached him with gay salutation, and inquired the name and title of the bearded man in the loose flowing robe.

"Know you not, in truth?" said the lively Earl, in some wonder. "In him you see the great rival of Godwin. He is the hero of the Danes, as Godwin is of the Saxons, a true son of Odin, Siward Earl of the Northumbrians." *

* Ord. Vital. See note on Lanfranc, at the end.

† Siward was almost a giant (*pene gigas statura*). There are some curious anecdotes of this hero, im-

"Notre Dame be my aid,—his fame hath oft filled my ears, and I should have lost the most welcome sight in Merrie England had I not now beheld him."

Therewith, the Duke approached courteously, and, doffing the cap he had hitherto retained, he greeted the old hero with those compliments which the Norman had already learned in the courts of the Frank.

The stout Earl received them coldly, and replying in Danish to William's Romance-tongue, he said,—

"Pardon, Count of the Normans, if these old lips cling to their old words. Both of us, methinks, date our lineage from the lands of the Norse. Suffer Siward to speak the language the sea-kings spoke. The old oak is not to be transplanted, and the old man keeps the ground where his youth took root."

The Duke, who with some difficulty comprehended the general meaning of Siward's speech, bit his lip, but replied courteously,—

"The youth of all nations may learn from renowned age. Much doth it shame me that I cannot commune with thee in the ancestral tongue; but the angels at least know the language of the Norman Christian, and I pray them and the saints for a calm end to thy brave career."

"Pray not to angel or saint for Siward son of Beorn," said the old man hastily; "let me not have a cow's death, but a warrior's; die in my mail of proof, axe in hand, and helm on head. And such may be my death, if Edward the King reads my rede and grants my prayer."

"I have influence with the King," said William; "name thy wish, that I may back it."

"The fiend forfend," said the grim Earl, "that a foreign prince should sway England's King, or that thegn and earl should ask other backing than leal service and just cause. If Edward be the saint men call him, he will loose me on the hell-wolf, without other cry than his own conscience."

The Duke turned inquiringly to Rolf; who, thus appealed to, said,—

"Siward urges my uncle to espouse the cause of Malcolm of Cumbira against the bloody tyrant Macbeth; and but for the disputes with the traitor Godwin, the King had long since turned his arms to Scotland."

"Call not traitors, young man," said the Earl, in high disdain, "those who, with all their faults and crimes, have placed thy kinsman on the throne of Canute."

"Hush, Rolf," said the Duke, observing the fierce young Norman about to reply hastily. "But methought, though my knowledge of English troubles is but scant, that Siward was the sworn foe to Godwin?"

"Foe to him in his power, friend to him in his wrongs;" answered Siward. "And if England needs defenders when I and Godwin are in our shrouds, there is but one man worthy of the days of old, and his name is Harold, the outlaw."

William's face changed remarkably, despite all his dissimulation; and, with a slight inclination of his head, he strode on, moody and irritated.

"This Harold! this Harold!" he muttered to himself, "all brave men speak to me of this Harold! Even my Norman knights name him with reluctant reverence, and even his foes do him honor;—verily his shadow is cast from exile over all the land."

Thus murmuring, he passed the throng with less than his wonted affable grace, and pushing back the officers who wished to precede him, entered, without ceremony, Edward's private chamber.

The king was alone, but talking loudly to himself, gesticulating vehemently, and altogether so changed from his ordinary placid apathy of mien, that William drew back in alarm and awe. Often had he heard indirectly, that of late years Edward was said to see visions, and be rapt from himself into the world of spirit and shadow; and such, he now doubted not, was the strange paroxysm of which he was made the witness. Edward's eyes were fixed on him, but evidently without recognizing his presence; the King's hands were outstretched, and he cried aloud in a voice of sharp anguish,—

mortalized by Shakspere, in the Bromton Chronicle. His grandfather is said to have been a bear, who fell in love with a Danish lady; and his father, Beorn, retained some of the traces of the parental physiognomy in a pair of pointed ears. The origin of this fable seems evident. His grandfather was a Berserker: for whether that name be derived, as is more generally supposed, from bare-sark,—or rather from bear-sark, that is, whether this grisly specimen of the Viking genus fought in his shirt or his bearskin, the name equally lends itself to those mystifications from which half the old legends, whether of Greece or Norway, are derived.

"*Sanguelac, Sanguelac!*—the Lake of Blood!—the waves spread, the waves redden! Mother of mercy—where is the ark?—where the Ararat?—Fly—fly—this way—this—" and he caught convulsive hold of William's arm. "No! there the corpses are piled—high and higher—there the horse of the Apocalypse tramples the dead in their gore."

In great horror, William took the King, now gasping on his breast, in his arms, and laid him on his bed, beneath its canopy of state, all blazoned with the martlets and cross of his insignia. Slowly Edward came to himself, with heavy sighs; and when at length he sate up and looked round, it was with evident unconsciousness of what had passed across his haggard and wandering spirit, for he said with his usual drowsy calmness,—

"Thanks, Guillaume, *bien aimé*, for rousing me from unseasoned sleep. How fares it with thee?"

"Nay, how with thee, dear friend and king? thy dreams have been troubled."

"Not so; I slept so heavily, methinks I could not have dreamed at all. But thou art clad as for a journey—spur on thy heel, staff in thy hand!"

"Long since, O dear host, I sent Odo to tell thee of the ill news from Normandy that compelled me to depart."

"I remember—I remember me now," said Edward, passing his pale womanly fingers over his forehead. "The heathen rage against thee. Ah! my poor brother, a crown is an awful head-gear. While yet time, why not both seek some quiet convent, and put away these earthly cares?"

William smiled and shook his head. "Nay, holy Edward, from all I have seen of convents, it is a dream to think that the monk's serge hides a calmer breast than the warrior's mail or the king's ermine. Now give me thy benison, for I go."

He knelt as he spoke, and Edward bent his hands over his head, and blessed him. Then, taking from his own neck a collar of zimmes (jewels and uncut gems), of great price, the King threw it over the broad throat bent before him, and rising, clapped his hands. A small door opened, giving a glimpse of the oratory within, and a monk appeared.

"Father, have my behests been fulfilled?—hath Hugoline, my treasurer, dispensed the gifts that I spoke of?"

"Verily yes; vault, coffer, and garde-robe—stall and meuse—are well nigh drained," answered the monk, with a sour look at the Norman, whose native avarice gleamed in his dark eyes as he heard the answer.

"Thy train go not hence empty-handed," said Edward fondly. "Thy father's halls sheltered the exile, and the exile forgets not the sole pleasure of a king—the power to requite. We may never meet again, William,—age creeps over me, and who will succeed to my thorny throne?"

William longed to answer,—to tell the hope that consumed him,—to remind his cousin of the vague promise in their youth, that the Norman Count should succeed to that "thorny throne;" but the presence of the Saxon monk repelled him, nor was there in Edward's uneasy look much to allure him on.

"But peace," continued the King, "be between thine and mine, as between thee and me!"

"Amen," said the Duke, "and I leave thee at least free from the proud rebels who so long disturbed thy reign. This House of Godwin, thou wilt not again let it tower above thy palace?"

"Nay, the future is with God and his saints;" answered Edward, feebly. "But Godwin is old—older than I, and bowed by many storms."

"Ay, his sons are more to be dreaded and kept aloof—mostly Harold!"

"Harold,—he was ever obedient, he alone of his kith; truly my soul mourns for Harold," said the king, sighing.

"The serpent's egg hatches but the serpent. Keep thy heel on it," said William, sternly.

"Thou speakest well," said the irresolute prince, who never seemed three days or three minutes together in the same mind. "Harold is in Ireland—there let him rest: better for all."

"For all," said the Duke; "so the saints keep thee, O royal saint!"

He kissed the King's hand, and strode away to the hall where Odo, Fitzosborne, and the priest Lanfranc awaited him. And

so that day, half-way towards the fair town of Dover, rode Duke William, and by the side of his roan barb ambled the priest's palfrey.

Behind came his gallant train, and with tumbrils and sumpter-mules laden with baggage, and enriched by Edward's gifts; while Welch hawks, and steeds of great price from the pastures of Surrey and the plains of Cambridge and York, attested no less acceptably than zimme, and golden chain, and broidered robe, the munificence of the grateful King.*

As they journeyed on, and the fame of the Duke's coming was sent abroad by the bodes or messengers, despatched to prepare the towns through which he was to pass for an arrival sooner than expected, the more high-born youths of England, especially those of the party counter to that of the banished Godwin, came round the ways to gaze upon that famous chief, who, from the age of fifteen, had wielded the most redoubtable sword of Christendom. And those youths wore the Norman garb: and in the towns, Norman counts held his stirrup to dismount, and Norman hosts spread the fastidious board; and when, at the eve of the next day, William saw the pennon of one of his own favorite chiefs waving in the van of armed men, that sallied forth from the towers of Dover (the key of the coast) he turned to the Lombard, still by his side, and said:

"Is not England part of Normandy already?"

And the Lombard answered:—

"The fruit is well nigh ripe, and the first breeze will shake it to thy feet. Put not out thy hand too soon. Let the wind do its work."

And the Duke made reply,

"As thou thinkest, so think I. And there is but one wind in the halls of heaven that can waft the fruit to the feet of another."

"And that?" asked the Lombard.

"Is the wind that blows from the shores of Ireland, when it fills the sails of Harold, son of Godwin."

"Thou fearest that man, and why?" asked the Lombard with interest.

And the Duke answered:—

"Because in the breast of Harold beats the heart of England."

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* Wace.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE HOUSE OF GODWIN.

CHAPTER I.

And all went to the desire of Duke William the Norman. With one hand he curbed his proud vassals, and drove back his fierce foes. With the other, he led to the altar Matilda, the maid of Flanders; and all happened as Lanfranc had foretold. William's most formidable enemy, the King of France, ceased to conspire against his new kinsman; and the neighboring princes said, "The Bastard hath become one of us since he placed by his side the descendant of Charlemagne." And Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen excommunicated the Duke and his bride, and the ban fell idle; for Lanfranc sent from Rome the Pope's dispensation and blessing,* conditionally only that bride and bridegroom founded each a church. And Mauger was summoned before the synod, and accused of unclerical crimes; and they deposed him from his state, and took from him abbacies and sees. And England, every day, waxed more and more Norman; and Edward grew more feeble and infirm, and there seemed not a barrier between the Norman Duke and the English throne, when suddenly the wind blew in the halls of heaven, and filled the sails of Harold the Earl.

And his ships came to the mouth of the Severn. And the people of Somerset and Devon, a mixed and mainly a Celtic race, who bore small love to the Saxons, drew together against him, and he put them to flight.†

Meanwhile, Godwin and his sons Sweyn, Tostig, and Gurth, who had taken refuge in that very Flanders from which William the Duke had won his bride,—(for Tostig had wed, previously, the sister of Matilda, the rose of Flanders; and Count Baldwin had, for his sons-in-law, both Tostig and William,)—meanwhile, I say, these, not holpen by the Count Baldwin, but helping themselves, lay at Bruges, ready to join Harold the Earl. And Edward, advised of this from the anxious Norman, caused forty ships * to be equipped, and put them under command of Rolf, Earl of Hereford. The ships lay at Sandwich in wait for Godwin. But the old Earl got from them, and landed quietly on the southern coast. And the fort of Hastings opened to his coming with a shout from its armed men.

All the boatmen, all the mariners, far and near, thronged to him, with sail and with shield, with sword and with oar. All Kent (the foster-mother of the Saxons) sent forth the cry, "Life or death with Earl Godwin." † Fast over the length and breadth of the land, went the bodes ‡ and riders of the Earl; and hosts, with one voice, answered the cry of the children of Horsa, "Life or death with Earl Godwin." And the ships of King Edward, in dismay, turned flag and prow to London, and the fleet of Harold sailed on. So the old Earl met his young son on the deck of a warship, that had once borne the Raven of the Dane.

Swelled and gathering sailed the armament of the English men. Slow up the Thames it sailed, and on either shore marched tumultuous the swarming multitudes. And

* See note (*e*) at the end (foot-note on the date of William's marriage).
† *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*

* Some writers say fifty.
† Hovenden.
‡ *Bodes*, i. e. messengers.

King Edward sent after more help, but it came up very late. So the fleet of the Earl nearly faced the Juliet Keape of London, and abode at Southwark till the flood-tide came up. When he had mustered his host, then came the flood-tide.*

CHAPTER II.

King Edward sate, not on his throne, but on a chair of state, in the presence-chamber of his palace of Westminster. His diadem, with the three zimmes shaped into a triple trefoil † on his brow, his sceptre in his right hand. His royal robe, tight to the throat, with a broad band of gold, flowed to his feet: and at the fold gathered round the left knee, where now the kings of England wear the badge of St. George, was embroidered a simple cross.‡ In that chamber met the thegns and proceres of his realm; but not they alone. No national Witan there assembled, but a council of war, composed at least one third part of Normans—counts, knights, prelates, and abbots of high degree.

And King Edward looked a king! The habitual lethargic meekness had vanished from his face, and the large crown threw a shadow, like a frown, over his brow. His spirit seemed to have risen from the weight it took from the sluggish blood of his father, Ethelred the Unready, and to have remounted to the brighter and earlier source of ancestral heroes. Worthy in that hour he seemed to boast the blood and wield the sceptre of Athelstan and Alfred.§

Thus spoke the King.

"Right worthy and beloved, my ealdermen, earls, and thegns of England; noble and familiar, my friends and guests, counts and chevaliers of Normandy, my mother's land; and you, our spiritual chiefs, above all ties of birth and country, Christendom your common appanage, and from Heaven your seignories and fiefs,—hear the words of Edward, the King of England, under grace of the Most High. The rebels are in our river; open yonder lattice, and you will see the piled shields glittering from their barks, and hear the hum of their hosts. Not a bow has yet been drawn, not a sword left its sheath; yet on the opposite side of the river are our fleets of forty sail—along the strand, between our palace and the gates of London, are arrayed our armies. And this pause because Godwin the traitor hath demanded truce, and his nuncius waits without. Are ye willing that we should hear the message? or would ye rather that we dismiss the messenger unheard, and pass at once, to rank and to sail, the war-cry of a Christian king, 'Holy Crosse and our Lady!'"

The King ceased, his left hand grasping firm the leopard head carved on his throne, and his sceptre untrembling in his lifted hand.

A murmur of *Notre Dame, Notre Dame*, the war-cry of the Normans, was heard amongst the stranger-knights of the audience; but haughty and arrogant as those strangers were, no one presumed to take precedence, in England's danger, of men English born.

Slowly then rose Alred, Bishop of Winchester, the worthiest prelate in all the land.*

"Kingly son," said the Bishop, "evil is the strife between men of the same blood and lineage, nor justified but by extremes, which have not yet been made clear to us. And ill would it sound throughout England were it said that the King's council gave, perchance, his city of London to sword and fire, and rent his land in twain, when a word in season might have disbanded yon armies, and given to your throne a submissive subject, where now you are menaced by a formidable rebel. Wherefore, I say, admit the nuncius."

Scarcely had Alred resumed his seat, before Robert the Norman prelate of Canter-

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* *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*

† Or Fleur-de-lis, which seems to have been a common form of ornament with the Saxon kings.

‡ Bayeux Tapestry.

§ See note (*f*) at the end.

* The *York Chronicle*, written by an Englishman, Stubbs, gives this eminent person an excellent character as peacemaker, "He could make the warmest friends of foes the most hostile." "De inimicissimis, amicissimos faceret." This gentle priest had yet the courage to curse the Norman Conqueror in the midst of his barons. That scene is not within the range of this work, but it is very strikingly told in the *Chronicle*.

bury started up,—a man, it was said, of worldly learning—and exclaimed,—

"To admit the messenger is to approve the treason. I do beseech the King to consult only his own royal heart and royal honor. Reflect—each moment of delay swells the rebel hosts,—strengthens their cause; of each moment they avail themselves, to allure to their side the misguided citizens. Delay but proves our own weakness; a king's name is a tower of strength, but only when fortified by a king's authority. Give the signal for—*war* I call it not—no—for chastisement and justice."

"As speaks my brother of Canterbury, speak I," said William, Bishop of London, another Norman.

But then there rose up a form at whose rising all murmurs were hushed.

Gray and vast, as some image of a gone and mightier age, towered over all Siward, the son of Beorn, the great Earl of Northumbria.

"We have nought to do with the Normans. Were they on the river, and our countrymen, Dane or Saxon, alone in this hall, small doubt of the King's choice, and niddering were the man who spoke of peace; but when Norman advises the dwellers of England to go forth and slay each other, no sword of mine shall be drawn at his hest. Who shall say that Siward of the Strong Arm, the grandson of the Berserker, ever turned from a foe? The foe, son of Ethelred, sits in these halls; I fight thy battles when I say Nay to the Norman! Brothers-in-arms of the kindred race and common tongue, Dane and Saxon long intermingled, proud alike of Canute the glorious and Alfred the wise, ye will hear the man whom Godwin, our countryman, sends to us; he at least will speak our tongue, and he knows our laws. If the demand he delivers be just, such as a King should grant, and our Witan should hear, woe to him who refuses; if unjust be the demand, shame to him who accedes. Warrior sends to warrior, countryman to countryman; hear we as countrymen, and judge as warriors. I have said."

The utmost excitement and agitation followed the speech of Siward,—unanimous applause from the Saxons, even those who in times of peace were most under the Norman contagion; but no words can paint the wrath and scorn of the Normans. They spoke loud and many at a time; the greatest disorder prevailed. But the majority being English, there could be no doubt as to the decision, and Edward, to whom the emergence gave both a dignity and presence of mind rare to him, resolved to terminate the dispute at once. He stretched forth his sceptre, and motioning to his chamberlain, bade him introduce the nuncius.*

A blank disappointment, not unmixed with apprehensive terror, succeeded the turbulent excitement of the Normans; for well they knew that the consequences, if not condition, of negotiations, would be their own downfall and banishment at the least;—happy, it might be, to escape massacre at the hands of the exasperated multitude.

The door at the end of the room opened, and the nuncius appeared. He was a sturdy, broad-shouldered man, of middle age, and in the long loose garb originally national with the Saxon, though then little in vogue; his beard thick and fair, his eyes gray and calm—a chief of Kent, where all the prejudices of his race were strongest, and whose yeomanry claimed in war the hereditary right to be placed in the front of battle.

He made his manly but deferential salutation to the august council as he approached; and pausing midway between the throne and door, he fell on his knees without thought of shame, for the King to whom he knelt was the descendant of Woden, and the heir of Hengist. At a sign and a brief word from the King, still on his knees, Vebba, the Kentman, spoke.

"To Edward, son of Ethelred, his most gracious king and lord, Godwin, son of Wolnoth, sends faithful and humble greeting, by Vebba, the thegn-born. He prays the King to hear him in kindness, and judge of him with mercy. Not against the King comes he hither with ships and arms; but against those only who would stand between the King's heart and the subject's: those who have divided a house against itself, and parted son and father, man and wife.—"

* Heralds, though probably the word is Saxon, were not then known in the modern acceptation of the word. The name given to the messenger or envoy who fulfilled that office was bode or nuncius. See note (*g*) at the end.

At those last words Edward's sceptre trembled in his hand, and his face grew almost stern.

"Of the King, Godwin but prays with all submiss and earnest prayer, to reverse the unrighteous outlawry against him and his; to restore to him and his sons their just possessions and well-won honors; and, more than all, to replace them where they have sought by loving service not unworthily to stand, in the grace of their born lord, and in the van of those who would uphold the laws and liberties of England. This done—the ships sail back to their haven; the thegn seeks his homestead, and the ceorl returns to the plough; for with Godwin are no strangers; and his force is but the love of his countrymen."

"Hast thou said?" quoth the King.

"I have said."

"Retire, and await our answer."

The Thegn of Kent was then led back into an ante-room, in which, armed from head to heel in ring-mail, were several Normans whose youth or station did not admit them into the council, but still of no mean interest in the discussion, from the lands and possessions they had already contrived to gripe out of the demesnes of the exiles;—burning for battle and eager for the word. Amongst these was Mallet de Graville.

The Norman valor of this young knight was, as we have seen, guided by Norman intelligence; and he had not disdained, since William's departure, to study the tongue of the country in which he hoped to exchange his mortgaged tower on the Seine, for some fair barony on the Humber or the Thames.

While the rest of his proud countrymen stood aloof, with eyes of silent scorn, from the homely nuncius, Mallet approached him with courteous bearing, and said in Saxon:—

"May I crave to know the issue of thy message from the reb—that is, from the doughty Earl?"

"I wait to learn it," said Vebba, bluffly.

"They heard thee throughout, then?"

"Throughout."

"Friendly Sir," said the Sire de Graville, seeking to subdue the tone of irony habitual to him, and acquired, perhaps, from his maternal ancestry, the Franks. "Friendly and peace-making Sir, dare I so far venture to intrude on the secrets of thy mission as to ask if Godwin demands, among other reasonable items, the head of thy humble servant—not by name indeed, for my name is as yet unknown to him—but as one of the unhappy class called Normans?"

"Had Earl Godwin," returned the nuncius, "thought fit to treat for peace by asking vengeance, he would have chosen another spokesman. The Earl asks but his own; and thy head is not, I trow, a part of his goods and chattels."

"That is comforting," said Mallet. "Marry, I thank thee, Sir Saxon; and thou speakest like a brave man and an honest. And if we fall to blows, as I suspect we shall, I should deem it a favor of our Lady the Virgin if she send thee across my way. Next to a fair friend I love a bold foe."

Vebba smiled, for he liked the sentiment, and the tone and air of the young knight pleased his rough mind, despite his prejudices against the stranger.

Encouraged by the smile, Mallet seated himself on the corner of the long table that skirted the room, and with a debonnair gesture invited Vebba to do the same; then looking at him gravely, he resumed—

"So frank and courteous thou art, Sir Envoy, that I yet intrude on thee my ignorant and curious questions."

"Speak out, Norman."

"How comes it, then, that you English so love this Earl Godwin?—Still more, why think you it right and proper that King Edward should love him too? It is a question I have often asked, and to which I am not likely in these halls to get answer satisfactory. If I know aught of your troublous history, this same Earl has changed sides oft eno'; first for the Saxon, then for Canute the Dane—Canute dies, and your friend takes up arms for the Saxon again. He yields to the advice of your Witan, and sides with Hardicanute and Harold, the Danes—a letter, nathless, is written as from Emma, the mother to the young Saxon princes, Edward and Alfred, inviting them over to England, and promising aid; the saints protect Edward, who continues to say *aves* in Normandy—Alfred comes over, Earl Godwin meets him, and, unless belied, does him homage, and swears to him faith. Nay, listen yet. This

Godwin, whom ye love so, then leads Alfred and his train into the ville of Guildford, I think ye call it,—fair quarters enow. At the dead of the night rush in King Harold's men, seize prince and follower, six hundred men in all; and next morning, saving only every tenth man, they are tortured and put to death. The prince is borne off to London, and shortly afterwards his eyes are torn out in the Islet of Ely, and he dies of the anguish! That ye should love Earl Godwin withal may be strange, but yet possible. But is it possible, *cher* Envoy, for the King to love the man who thus betrayed his brother to the shambles?"

"All this is a Norman fable," said the Thegn of Kent, with a disturbed visage; "and Godwin cleared himself on oath of all share in the foul murder of Alfred."

"The oath, I have heard, was backed," said the knight drily, "by a present to Hardicanute, who after the death of King Harold resolved to avenge the black butchery; a present, I say, of a gilt ship manned by fourscore warriors with gold hilted swords, and gilt helms.—But let this pass."

"Let it pass," echoed Vebba with a sigh. "Bloody were those times, and unholy their secrets."

"Yet answer me still, why love you Earl Godwin? He hath changed sides from party to party, and in each change won lordships and lands. He is ambitious and grasping, ye all allow; for the ballads sung in your streets liken him to the thorn and the bramble, at which the sheep leaves his wool. He is haughty and overbearing. Tell me, O Saxon, frank Saxon, why you love Godwin the Earl! Fain would I know; for, please the saints (and you and your Earl so permitting), I mean to live and die in this merrie England; and it would be pleasant to learn that I have but to do as Earl Godwin, in order to win love from the English."

The stout Vebba looked perplexed; but after stroking his beard thoughtfully, he answered thus—

"Though of Kent, and therefore in his earldom, I am not one of Godwin's especial party; for that reason was I chosen his bode. Those who are under him doubtless love a chief liberal to give and strong to protect. The old age of a great leader gathers reverence, as an oak gathers moss. But to me, and those like me, living peaceful at home, shunning courts, and tempting not broils, Godwin the *man* is not dear—it is Godwin the *thing*."

"Though I do my best to know your language," said the knight, "ye have phrases that might puzzle King Solomon. What meanest thou by 'Godwin the thing?'"

"That which to us Godwin only seems to uphold. We love justice; whatever his offences, Godwin was banished unjustly. We love our laws; Godwin was dishonored by maintaining them. We love England, and are devoured by strangers; Godwin's cause is England's, and—stranger, forgive me for not concluding."

Then examining the young Norman with a look of rough compassion, he laid his large hand upon the knight's shoulder and whispered,—

"Take my advice—and fly."

"Fly!" said De Graville, reddening. "Is it to fly, think you, that I have put on my mail, and girded my sword?"

"Vain—vain! Wasps are fierce, but the swarm is doomed when the straw is kindled. I tell you this—fly in time and you are safe; but let the King be so misguided as to count on arms, and strive against yon multitude, and verily before nightfall not one Norman will be found alive within ten miles of the city. Look to it, youth! Perhaps thou hast a mother—let her not mourn a son!"

Before the Norman could shape into Saxon sufficiently polite and courtly his profound and indignant disdain of the counsel, his sense of the impertinence with which his shoulder had been profaned, and his mother's son had been warned, the nuncius was again summoned into the presence-chamber. Nor did he return into the ante-room, but conducted forthwith from the council—his brief answer received—to the stairs of the palace, he reached the boat in which he had come, and was rowed back to the ship that held the Earl and his sons.

Now this was the manœuvre of Godwin's array. His vessels having passed London Bridge, had rested awhile on the banks of the Southward suburb (Suth-weorde)—since called Southwark—and the King's ships lay to the north; but the fleet of the Earl's, after

a brief halt, veered majestically round, and coming close to the palace of Westminster, inclined northward, as if to hem the King's ships. Meanwhile the land forces drew up close to the Strand, almost within bow-shot of the King's troops, that kept the ground inland; thus Vebba saw before him, so near as scarcely to be distinguished from each other, on the river the rival fleets, on the shore the rival armaments.

High above all the vessels towered the majestic bark, or æsca, that had borne Harold from the Irish shores. Its fashion was that of the ancient sea-kings, to one of whom it had belonged. Its curved and mighty prow, richly gilded, stood out far above the waves: the prow, the head of the sea-snake; the stern its spire; head and spire alike glittering in the sun.

The boat drew up to the lofty side of the vessel, a ladder was lowered, the nuncius ascended lightly and stood on deck. At the farther end grouped the sailors, few in number, and at respectful distance from the Earl and his sons.

Godwin himself was but half armed. His head was bare, nor had he other weapon of offence than the gilt battle-axe of the Danes —weapon as much of office as of war; but his broad breast was covered with the ring mail of the time. His stature was lower than that of any of his sons; nor did his form exhibit greater physical strength than that of a man, well shaped, robust, and deep of chest, who still preserved in age the pith and sinew of mature manhood. Neither, indeed, did legend or fame ascribe to that eminent personage those romantic achievements, those feats of purely animal prowess, which distinguished his rival Siward. Brave he was, but brave as a leader; those faculties in which he appears to have excelled all his contemporaries, were more analogous to the requisites of success in civilized times, than those which won renown of old. And perhaps England was the only country then in Europe which could have given to those faculties their fitting career. He possessed essentially the arts of party; he knew how to deal with vast masses of mankind; he could carry along with his interests the fervid heart of the multitude; he had in the highest degree that gift, useless in most other lands—in all lands where popular assemblies do not exist—the gift of popular eloquence. Ages elapsed, after the Norman conquest, ere eloquence again became a power in England.*

But like all men renowned for eloquence, he went with the popular feeling of his times; he embodied its passions, its prejudices—but also that keen sense of self-interest, which is the invariable characteristic of a multitude. He *was* the sense of the commonalty carried to its highest degree. Whatever the faults, it may be the crimes, of a career singularly prosperous and splendid, amidst events the darkest and most terrible,—shining with a steady light across the thunder-clouds,—he was never accused of cruelty or outrage to the mass of the people.

English, emphatically, the English deemed him; and this not the less that in his youth he had sided with Canute, and owed his fortunes to that king; for so intermixed were Danes and Saxons in England, that the agreement which had given to Canute one half the kingdom had been received with general applause; and the earlier severities of that great prince had been so redeemed in his later years by wisdom and mildness—so, even in the worst period of his reign, relieved by extraordinary personal affability, and so lost now in men's memories by pride in his power and fame,—that Canute had left behind him a beloved and honored name,† and Godwin was the more esteemed as the chosen counsellor of that popular prince. At his death, Godwin was known to have wished, and even armed, for the restoration of the Saxon line; and only yielded to the determination of the Witan, no doubt acted upon by the popular opinion. Of one dark crime he was suspected, and, despite his oath to the contrary, and the formal acquittal of the national council, doubt of his guilt rested then, as it rests still, upon his name; viz. the per-

* When the chronicler praises the gift of speech, he unconsciously proves the existence of constitutional freedom.

† Recent Danish historians have in vain endeavored to detract from the reputation of Canute as an *English* monarch. The Danes are, doubtless, the best authorities for his character in Denmark. But our own English authorities are sufficiently decisive as to the personal popularity of Canute in this country, and the affection entertained for his laws.

fidious surrender of Alfred, Edward's murdered brother.

But time had passed over the dismal tragedy; and there was an instinctive and prophetic feeling throughout the English nation, that with the House of Godwin was identified the cause of the English people. Everything in this man's aspect served to plead in his favor. His ample brows were calm with benignity and thought; his large dark blue eyes were serene and mild, though their expression, when examined, was close and inscrutable. His mien was singularly noble, but wholly without formality or affected state: and though haughtiness and arrogance were largely attributed to him, they could be found only in his deeds, not manner—plain, familiar, kindly to all men, his heart seemed as open to the service of his countrymen as his hospitable door to their wants.

Behind him stood the stateliest group of sons that ever filled with pride a father's eye. Each strikingly distinguished from the other, all remarkable for beauty of countenance and strength of frame.

Sweyn, the eldest,* had the dark hues of his mother the Dane: a wild and mournful majesty sat upon features aquiline and regular, but wasted by grief or passion; raven locks, glossy even in neglect, fell half over eyes hollow in their sockets, but bright, though with troubled fire. Over his shoulder he bore his mighty axe. His form, spare, but of immense power, was sheathed in mail, and he leant on his great pointed Danish shield. At his feet sate his young son Haco, a boy with a countenance preternaturally thoughtful for his years, which were yet those of childhood.

Next to him stood the most dreaded and ruthless of the sons of Godwin—he, fated to become to the Saxon what Julian was to the Goth. With his arms folded on his breast stood Tostig; his face was beautiful as a Greek's, in all save the forehead, which was low and lowering. Sleek and trim were his bright chestnut locks; and his arms were damascened with silver, for he was one who loved the pomp and luxury of war.

Wolnoth, the mother's favorite, seemed yet in the first flower of youth, but he alone of all the sons had something irresolute and effeminate in his aspect and bearing; his form, though tall, had not yet come to its full height and strength; and, as if the weight of mail were unusual to him, he leant with both hands upon the wood of his long spear. Leofwine, who stood next to Wolnoth, contrasted him notably; his sunny locks wreathed carelessly over a white unclouded brow, and the silken hair on the upper lip quivered over arch lips, smiling, even in that serious hour.

At Godwin's right hand, but not immediately near him, stood the last of the group, Gurth and Harold. Gurth had passed his arm over the shoulder of his brother, and not watching the nuncius while he spoke, watched only the effect his words produced on the face of Harold. For Gurth loved Harold as Jonathan loved David. And Harold was the only one of the group not armed; and had a veteran skilled in war been asked who of that group was born to lead armed men, he would have pointed to the man unarmed.

"So what says the King?" asked Earl Godwin.

"This; he refuses to restore thee and thy sons, or to hear thee, till thou hast disbanded thine army, dismissed thy ships, and consented to clear thyself and thy house before the Witana-gemot."

A fierce laugh broke from Tostig; Sweyn's mournful brow grew darker; Leofwine placed his right hand on his ateghar; Wolnoth rose erect; Gurth kept his eyes on Harold, and Harold's face was unmoved.

"The King received thee in his council of war," said Godwin, thoughtfully, "and doubtless the Normans were there. Who were the Englishmen most of mark?"

"Siward of Northumbria, thy foe."

* Some of our historians erroneously represent Harold as the eldest son. But Florence, the best authority we have, in the silence of the *Saxon Chronicle*, as well as Knyghton, distinctly states Sweyn to be the eldest; Harold was the second, and Tostig was the third. Sweyn's seniority seems corroborated by the greater importance of his earldom. The Norman chroniclers, in their spite to Harold, wish to make him junior to Tostig—for the reasons evident at the close of this work. And the Norwegian chronicler, Snorro Sturleson, says that Harold was the youngest of all the sons; so little was really known, or cared to be accurately known, of that great house which so nearly founded a new dynasty of English kings.

"My sons," said the Earl, turning to his children, and breathing loud as if a load were off his heart; "there will be no need of axe or armor to-day. Harold alone was wise," and he pointed to the linen tunic of the son thus cited.

"What mean you, Sir Father?" said Tostig, imperiously. "Think you to—"

"Peace, son, peace;" said Godwin, without asperity, but with conscious command. "Return, brave and dear friend," he said to Vebba, "find out Siward the Earl; tell him that I, Godwin, his foe in the old time, place honor and life in his hands, and what he counsels that will we do.—Go."

The Kent man nodded, and regained his boat. Then spoke Harold.

"Father, yonder are the forces of Edward; as yet without leaders, since the chiefs must be still in the halls of the King. Some fiery Norman amongst them may provoke an encounter; and this city of London is not won, as it behoves us to win it, if one drop of English blood dye the sword of one English man. Wherefore, with your leave, I will take boat and land. And unless I have lost in my absence all right lere in the hearts of our countrymen, at the first shout from our troops which proclaims that Harold, son of Godwin, is on the soil of our fathers, half yon array of spears and helms pass at once to our side."

"And if not, my vain brother?" said Tostig, gnawing his lip with envy.

"And if not, I will ride alone into the midst of them, and ask what Englishmen are there who will aim shaft or spear at this breast, never mailed against England!"

Godwin placed his hand on Harold's head, and the tears came to those close cold eyes.

"Thou knowest by nature what I have learned by art. Go and prosper. Be it as thou wilt."

"He takes thy post, Sweyn—thou art the elder," said Tostig, to the wild form by his side.

"There is guilt on my soul, and woe in my heart," answered Sweyn, moodily. "Shall Esau lose his birthright, and Cain retain it?" So saying, he withdrew, and, reclining against the stern of the vessel, leant his face upon the edge of his shield.

Harold watched him with deep compassion in his eyes, passed to his side with a quick step, pressed his hand, and whispered, "Peace to the past, O my brother!"

The boy Haco, who had noiselessly followed his father, lifted his sombre, serious looks to Harold as he thus spoke; and when Harold turned away, he said to Sweyn, timidly, "*He*, at least, is ever good to thee and to me."

"And thou, when I am no more, shalt cling to him as thy father, Haco," answered Sweyn, tenderly smoothing back the child's dark locks.

The boy shivered; and, bending his head, murmured to himself, "When thou art no more! No more? Has the Vala doomed *him*, too? Father and son, both?"

Meanwhile, Harold had entered the boat lowered from the sides of the æsca to receive him; and Gurth, looking appealingly to his father, and seeing no sign of dissent, sprang down after the young Earl, and seated himself by his side.

Godwin followed the boat with musing eyes.

"Small need," said he, aloud, but to himself, "to believe in soothsayers, or to credit Hilda the saga, when she prophesied, ere we left our shores, that Harold——" He stopped short, for Tostig's wrathful exclamation broke on his reverie.

"Father, father! My blood surges in my ears, and boils in my heart, when I hear thee name the prophecies of Hilda, in favor of thy darling. Dissension and strife in our house have they wrought already; and if the feuds between Harold and me have sown gray in thy locks, thank thyself when, flushed with vain soothsayings for thy favored Harold, thou saidst, in the hour of our first childish broil, 'Strive not with Harold; for his brothers will be his men.'"

"Falsify the prediction," said Godwin, calmly; "wise men may always make their own future, and seize their own fates. Prudence, patience, labor, valor; these are the stars that rule the career of mortals."

Tostig made no answer; for the splash of oars was near, and two ships, containing the principal chiefs that had joined Godwin's cause, came alongside the Runic æsca to hear the result of the message sent to the King. Tostig sprang to the vessel's side,

and exclaimed, "The King, girt by his false counsellors, will hear us not, and arms must decide between us."

"Hold, hold! malignant, unhappy boy!" cried Godwin, between his grinded teeth, as a shout of indignant, yet joyous ferocity, broke from the crowded ships thus hailed. "The curse of all time be on him who draws the first native blood in sight of the altars and hearths of London! Hear me, thou with the vulture's blood-lust, and the peacock's vain joy in the gaudy plume! Hear me, Tostig, and tremble. If but by one word thou widen the breach between me and the King, outlaw thou enterest England, outlaw shalt thou depart—for earldom and broad lands, choose the bread of the stranger, and the weregeld of the wolf!"

The young Saxon, haughty as he was, quailed at his father's thrilling voice, bowed his head, and retreated sullenly. Godwin sprang on the deck of the nearest vessel, and all the passions that Tostig had aroused, he exerted his eloquence to appease.

In the midst of his arguments, there rose from the ranks on the strand, the shout of "Harold! Harold the Earl! Harold and Holy Crosse!" And Godwin, turning his eye to the King's ranks, saw them agitated, swayed, and moving; tlll suddenly from the very heart of the hostile array, came, as by irresistible impulse, the cry—"Harold, our Harold! All hail, the good Earl!"

While this chanced without,—within the palace, Edward had quitted the presence-chamber, and was closeted with Stigand, the bishop. This prelate had the more influence with Edward, inasmuch as though Saxon, he was held to be no enemy to the Normans, and had, indeed, on a former occasion, been deposed from his bishopric on the charge of too great an attachment to the Norman Queen-mother Emma.* Never in his whole life had Edward been so stubborn as on this occasion. For here, more than his realm was concerned, he was threatened in the peace of his household, and the comfort of his tepid friendships. With the recall of his powerful father-in-law, he foresaw the necessary reintrusion of his wife upon the charm of his chaste solitude. His favorite Normans would be banished, he should be surrounded with faces he abhorred. All the representations of Stigand fell upon a stern and unyielding spirit, when Siward entered the King's closet.

"Sir, my King," said the great son of Beorn, "I yielded to your kingly will in the council, that, before we listened to Godwin, he should disband his men, and submit to the judgment of the Witan. The Earl hath sent to me to say, that he will put honor and life in my keeping, and abide by my counsel. And I have answered as became the man who will never snare a foe, or betray a trust."

"How hast thou answered?" asked the King.

"That he abide by the laws of England, as Dane and Saxon agreed to abide in the days of Canute; that he and his sons shall make no claim for land or lordship, but submit all to the Witan."

"Good," said the King; "and the Witan will condemn him now, as it would have condemned when he shunned to meet it?"

"And the Witan *now*," returned the Earl emphatically, "will be free, and fair, and just."

"And meanwhile, the troops——"

"Will wait on either side; and if reason fail, then the sword," said Siward.

"This I will not hear," exclaimed Edward; when the tramp of many feet thundered along the passage; the door was flung open, and several captains (Norman as well as Saxon) of the King's troops rushed in, wild, rude, and tumultuous.

"The troops desert! half the ranks have thrown down their arms at the very name of Harold!" exclaimed the Earl of Hereford "Curses on the knaves!"

"And the lithsmen of London," cried a Saxon thegn, "are all on his side, and marching already through the gates."

"Pause yet," whispered Stigand; "and who shall say, this hour to-morrow, if Edward or Godwin reign on the throne of Alfred?"

His stern he rt moved by the distress of

* *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, A.D. 1043. "Stigand was deposed from his bishopric, and all that he possessed was seized into the king's hands, because he was received to his mother's counsel, and she went just as he advised her, as people thought." The saintly Confessor dealt with his bishops as summarily as Henry VIII. could have done, after his quarrel with the Pope.

his King, and not the less for the unwonted firmness which Edward displayed, Siward here approached, knelt, and took the King's hand.

"Siward can give no niddering counsel to his King; to save the blood of his subjects is never a King's disgrace. Yield thou to mercy—Godwin to the law!"

"Oh for the cowl and cell!" exclaimed the Prince, wringing his hands. "Oh Norman home, why did I leave thee?"

He took the cross from his breast, contemplated it fixedly, prayed silently but with fervor, and his face again became tranquil.

"Go," he said, flinging himself on his seat in the exhaustion that follows passion, "Go, Siward, go, Stigand, deal with things mundane as ye will."

The Bishop, satisfied with this reluctant acquiescence, seized Siward by the arm and withdrew him from the closet. The captains remained a few moments behind, the Saxons silently gazing on the King, the Normans whispering each other, in great doubt and trouble, and darting looks of the bitterest scorn at their feeble benefactor. Then, as with one accord, these last rushed along the corridor, gained the hall where their countrymen yet assembled, and exclaimed, "*A toute bride! Franc étrier!*—All is lost but life!—God for the first man,—knife and cord for the last!"

Then, as the cry of fire, or as the first crash of an earthquake, dissolves all union, and reduces all emotion into one thought of self-saving, the whole conclave, crowding pell mell on each other, bustled, jostled, clamored to the door—happy he who could find horse—palfrey,—even monk's mule! This way, that way, fled those lordly Normans, those martial abbots, those mitred bishops—some singly, some in pairs; some by tens, and some by scores; but all prudently shunning association with those chiefs whom they had most courted the day before, and who, they now knew, would be the main mark for revenge; save only two, who yet, from that awe of the spiritual power which characterized the Norman, who was already half monk, half soldier—(Crusader and Templar before Crusades were yet preached, or the Templars yet dreamed of),—even in that hour of selfish panic rallied round them the prowest chivalry of their countrymen, viz., the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Both these dignitaries, armed *cap-à-pié*, and spear in hand, headed the flight; and good service that day, both as guide and champion, did Mallet de Graville. He led them in a circuit behind both armies, but being intercepted by a new body, coming from the pastures of Hertfordshire to the help of Godwin, he was compelled to take the bold and desperate resort of entering the city gates. These were wide open; whether to admit the Saxon Earls, or vomit forth their allies, the Londoners. Through these, up the narrow streets, riding three a-breast, dashed the slaughtering fugitives; worthy in flight of their national renown, they trampled down every obstacle. Bodies of men drew up against them at every angle, with the Saxon cry of "Out!—Out!" "Down with the outland men!" Through each, spear pierced, and sword clove, the way. Red with gore was the spear of the prelate of London; broken to the hilt was the sword militant in the terrible hand of the Archbishop of Canterbury. So on they rode, so on they slaughtered—gained the Eastern Gate, and passed with but two of their number lost.

The fields once gained, for better precaution they separated. Some few, not quite ignorant of the Saxon tongue, doffed their mail, and crept through forest and fell towards the sea shore; others retained steed and arms, but shunned equally the high roads. The two prelates were among the last; they gained, in safety, Ness, in Essex, threw themselves into an open, crazy, fishing-boat, committed themselves to the waves, and, half drowned and half famished, drifted over the Channel to the French shores. Of the rest of the courtly foreigners, some took refuge in the forts yet held by their countrymen; some lay concealed in creeks and caves till they could find or steal boats for their passage. And thus, in the year of our Lord 1052, occurred the notable dispersion and ignominious flight of the counts and vavasours of great William the Duke!

CHAPTER III.

THE Witana-gemot was assembled in the Great Hall of Westminster in all its imperial pomp.

It was on his throne that the King sate now—and it was the sword that was in his right hand. Some seated below, and some standing beside, the throne, were the officers of the Basileus* of Britain. There, were to be seen camararius and pincerna, chamberlain and cupbearer; disc thegn and hors thegn;† the thegn of the dishes, and the thegn of the stud; with many more, whose state offices may not impossibly have been borrowed from the ceremonial pomp of the Byzantine court; for Edgar, King of England, had in the old time styled himself the Heir of Constantine. Next to these sat the clerks of the chapel, with the King's confessor at their head. Officers were they of higher note than their name bespeaks, and wielders, in the trust of the Great Seal, of a power unknown of old, and now obnoxious to the Saxon. For tedious is the suit which lingers for the king's writ and the king's seal; and from those clerks shall arise hereafter a thing of torture and of might, which shall grind out the hearts of men, and be called CHANCERY!‡

Below the scribes, a space was left on the floor, and farther down sat the chiefs of the Witan. Of these, first in order, both from their spiritual rank and their vast temporal possessions, sat the lords of the Church; the chairs of the prelates of London and Canterbury were void. But still goodly was the array of Saxon mitres, with the harsh, hungry, but intelligent face of Stigand,—Stigand the stout and the covetous; and the benign but firm features of Alred, true priest and true patriot, distinguished amidst all. Around each prelate, as stars round a sun, were his own special priestly retainers, selected from his diocese. Farther still down the hall are the great civil lords and vice-king vassals of the "Lord Paramount." Vacant the chair of the King of the Scots, for Siward hath not yet had his wish; Macbeth is in his fastnesses, or listening to the weird sisters in the wold; and Malcolm is a fugitive in the halls of the Northumbrian earl. Vacant the chair of the hero Gryffyth, son of Llewelyn, the dread of the marches, Prince of Gwyned, whose arms had subjugated all Cymry. But there are the lesser sub-kings of Wales, true to the immemorial schisms amongst themselves, which destroyed the realm of Ambrosius, and rendered vain the arm of Arthur. With their torques of gold, and wild eyes, and hair cut round ears and brow,* they stare on the scene.

On the same bench with these sub-kings, distinguished from them by height of stature, and calm collectedness of mien, no less than by their caps of maintenance and furred robes, are those props of strong thrones and terrors of weak—the earls to whom shires and counties fall, as hyde and carricate to the lesser thegns. But three of these were then present, and all three the foes of Godwin,—Siward, Earl of Northumbria; Leofric of Mercia (that Leofric whose wife Godiva yet lives in ballad and song); and Rolf, Earl of Hereford and Worcestershire, who, strong in his claim of "king's blood," left not the court with his Norman friends. And on the same benches, though a little apart, are the lesser earls, and that higher order of thegns, called king's thegns.

Not far from these sate the chosen citizens from the free burgh of London, already of great weight in the senate,*—sufficing often to turn its counsels; all friends were they of the English Earl and his house. In the same division of the hall were found the bulk and true popular part of the meeting—popular indeed—as representing not the people, but the things the people most prized—valor and wealth; the thegn landowners,

* The title of Basileus was retained by our kings so late as the time of John, who styled himself "Totius Insulæ Britannicæ Basileus."—AGARD: *On the Antiquity of Shires in England, ap Hearne, Cur. Disc.*

† Sharon Turner.

‡ See the Introduction to PALGRAVE'S *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, from which this description of the Witan is borrowed so largely, that I am left without other apology for the plagiarism, than the frank confession, that if I could have found in others, or conceived from my own resources, a description half as graphic and half as accurate, I would only have plagiarized to half the extent I have done.

* Girald. Gambrensis.

† Palgrave omits, I presume accidentally, these members of the Witan, but it is clear from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that the London "lithsmen" were represented in the great National Witans, and helped to decide the election even of kings.

called in the old deeds the "Ministers:" they sate with swords by their side, all of varying birth, fortune, and connection, whether with king, earl, or ceorl. For in the different districts of the old Heptarchy, the qualification varied; high in East Anglia, low in Wessex; so that what was wealth in the one shire was poverty in the other. There sate, half a yeoman, the Saxon thegn of Berkshire or Dorset, proud of his five hydes of land; there, half an earldoman, the Danish thegn of Norfolk or Ely, discontented with his forty; some were there in right of smaller offices under the crown; some traders, and sons of traders, for having crossed the high seas three times at their own risk; some could boast the blood of Offa and Egbert; and some traced but three generations back to neat-herd and ploughman; and some were Saxons and some were Danes: and some from the western shires were by origin Britons, though little cognizant of their race. Farther down still, at the extreme end of the hall, crowding by the open doors, filling up the space without, were the ceorls themselves, a vast and not powerless body; in these high courts (distinct from the shire gemots, or local senates)—never called upon to vote or to speak or to act, or even to sign names to the doom, but only to shout "Yea, yea," when the proceres pronounced their sentence. Yet not powerless were they, but rather to the Witan, what public opinion is to the Witan's successor, our modern parliament: they *were* opinion! And according to their numbers and their sentiments, easily known and boldly murmured, often and often must that august court of basileus and prelate, vassal-king and mighty earl, have shaped the council and adjudged the doom.

And the forms of the meeting had been duly said and done; and the King had spoken words, no doubt wary and peaceful, gracious and exhortatory; but those words —for his voice that day was weak—travelled not beyond the small circle of his clerks and his officers; and a murmur buzzed through the hall, when Earl Godwin stood on the floor with his six sons at his back; and you might have heard the hum of the gnat that vexed the smooth cheek of Earl Rolf, or the click of the spider from the web on the vaulted roof, the moment before Earl Godwin spoke.

"If," said he, with the modest look and downcast eye of practised eloquence, "If I rejoice once more to breathe the air of England, in whose service, often perhaps with faulty deeds, but at all times with honest thoughts, I have, both in war and council, devoted so much of my life that little now remains—but (should you, my king, and you, prelates, proceres, and ministers so vouchsafe) to look round and select that spot of my native soil which shall receive my bones;—if I rejoice to stand once more in that assembly which has often listened to my voice when our common country was in peril, who here will blame that joy? Who among my foes, if foes now I have, will not respect the old man's gladness? Who amongst you, earls and thegns, would not grieve, if his duty bade him say to the gray-haired exile, 'In this English air you shall not breathe your last sigh—on this English soil you shall not find a grave!' Who amongst you would not grieve to say it?" (Suddenly he drew up his head and faced his audience.) "Who amongst you hath the courage and the heart to say it? Yes, I rejoice that I am at last in an assembly fit to judge my cause, and pronounce my innocence. For what offence was I outlawed? For what offence were I, and the six sons I have given to my land, to bear the wolf's penalty, and be chased and slain as the wild beasts? Hear me, and answer!

"Eustace, Count of Boulogne, returning to his domains from a visit to our lord the King, entered the town of Dover in mail and on his war steed; his train did the same. Unknowing our laws and customs (for I desire to press light upon all old grievances, and will impute ill designs to none), these foreigners invade by force the private dwellings of citizens, and there select their quarters. Ye all know that this was the strongest violation of Saxon right; ye know that the meanest ceorl hath the proverb on his lip, 'Every man's house is his castle.' One of the townsmen acting on this belief,—which I have yet to learn was a false one,—expelled from his threshold a retainer of the French Earl's. The stranger drew his sword and wounded him; blows followed—the stranger

fell by the arm he had provoked. The news arrives to Earl Eustace; he and his kinsmen spur to the spot; they murder the Englishman on his hearthstone.—"

Here a groan, half-stifled and wrathful, broke from the ceorls at the end of the hall. Godwin held up his hand in rebuke of the interruption, and resumed.

"This deed done, the outlanders rode through the streets with their drawn swords; they butchered those who came in their way; they trampled even children under their horses' feet. The burghers armed. I thank the Divine Father, who gave me for my countrymen those gallant burghers! They fought as we English know how to fight; they slew some nineteen or score of these mailed intruders; they chased them from the town. Earl Eustace fled fast. Earl Eustace we know is a wise man: small rest took he, little bread broke he, till he pulled rein at the gate of Gloucester, where my lord the King then held court. He made his complaint. My lord the King, naturally hearing but one side, thought the burghers in the wrong; and, scandalized that such high persons of his own kith should be so aggrieved, he sent for me, in whose government the burgh of Dover is, and bade me chastise, by military execution, those who had attacked the foreign Count. I appeal to the great Earls whom I see before me—to you, illustrious Leofric; to you, renowned Siward—what value would ye set on your earldoms, if ye had not the heart and the power to see right done to the dwellers therein?

"What was the course I proposed? Instead of martial execution, which would involve the whole burgh in one sentence, I submitted that the reeve and gerefas of the burgh should be cited to appear before the King, and account for the broil. My lord, though ever most clement and loving to his good people, either unhappily moved against me, or overswayed by the foreigners, was counselled to reject this mode of doing justice, which our laws, as settled under Edgar and Canute, enjoin. And because I would not,—and I say in the presence of all, because I, Godwin son of Wolnoth, *durst* not, if I would, have entered the free burgh of Dover with mail on my back and the doomsman at my right hand, these outlanders induced my lord the King to summon me to attend in person (as for a sin of my own) the council of the Witan, convened at Gloucester, then filled with the foreigners, not, as I humbly opined, to do justice to me and my folk of Dover, but to secure to this Count of Boulogne a triumph over English liberties, and sanction his scorn for the value of English lives.

"I hesitated, and was menaced with outlawry; I armed in self-defence, and in defence of the laws of England; I armed, that men might not be murdered on their hearthstones, nor children trampled under the hoofs of a stranger's war-steed. My lord the king gathered his troops round 'the cross and the martlets.' Yon noble earls, Siward and Leofric, came to that standard, as (knowing not then my cause) was their duty to the Basileus of Britain. But when they knew my cause, and saw *with* me the dwellers of the land, *against* me the outland aliens, they righteously interposed. An armistice was concluded; I agreed to refer all matters to a Witan held where it is held this day. My troops were disbanded; but the foreigners induced my lord not only to retain his own, but to issue his Herr-bann for the gathering of hosts far and near, even allies beyond the seas. When I looked to London for the peaceful Witan, what saw I? The largest armament that had been collected in this reign—that armament headed by Norman knights. Was this the meeting where justice could be done mine and me? Nevertheless, what was my offer? That I and my six sons would attend, provided the usual sureties, agreeable to our laws, from which only thieves * are excluded, were given that we should come and go life-free and safe. Twice this offer was made, twice refused; and so I and my sons were banished. We went;—we have returned!"

"And in arms," murmured Earl Rolf, son-in-law to that Count Eustace of Boulogne, whose violence had been temperately and truly narrated.†

* By Athelstan's law, every man was to have peace going to and from the witan, unless he was a thief. —WILKINS, p. 137.

† Goda, Edward's sister, married first Rolf's father, Count of Mantes; secondly, the Count of Boulogne.

"And in arms," repeated Godwin: "true; in arms against the foreigners who had thus poisoned the ear of our gracious King; in arms, Earl Rolf; and at the first clash of those arms, Franks and foreigners have fled. We have no need of arms now. We are amongst our countrymen, and no Frenchman interposes between us and the ever gentle, ever generous nature of our born King.

"Peers and proceres, chiefs of this Witan, perhaps the largest ever yet assembled in man's memory, it is for you to decide whether I and mine, or the foreign fugitives, caused the dissension in these realms; whether our banishment was just or not; whether in our return we have abused the power we possessed. Ministers, on those swords by your sides there is not one drop of blood! At all events, in submitting to you our fate, we submit to our own laws and our own race. I am here to clear myself, on my oath, of deed and thought of treason. There are amongst my peers as king's thegns, those who will attest the same on my behalf, and prove the facts I have stated, if they are not sufficiently notorious. As for my sons, no crime can be alleged against them, unless it be a crime to have in their veins that blood which flows in mine—blood which they have learned from me to shed in defence of that beloved land to which they now ask to be recalled."

The Earl ceased and receded behind his children, having artfully, by his very abstinence from the more heated eloquence imputed to him often as a fault and a wile, produced a powerful effect upon an audience already prepared for his acquittal.

But now as, from the sons, Sweyn the eldest stepped forth, with a wandering eye and uncertain foot, there was a movement like a shudder amongst the large majority of the audience, and a murmur of hate or of horror.

The young Earl marked the sensation his presence produced, and stopped short. His breath came thick; he raised his right hand, but spoke not. His voice died on his lips; his eyes roved wildly round with a haggard stare more imploring than defying. Then rose, in his episcopal stole, Alred the bishop, and his clear sweet voice trembled as he spoke.

"Comes Sweyn, son of Godwin, here, to prove his innocence of treason against the King?—if so, let him hold his peace; for if the Witan acquit Godwin son of Wolnoth of that charge, the acquittal includes his House. But in the name of the holy Church here represented by its fathers, will Sweyn say, and fasten his word by oath, that he is guiltless of treason to the King of Kings—guiltless of sacrilege that my lips shrink to name? Alas, that the duty falls on me,—for I loved thee once, and love thy kindred now. But I am God's servant before all things"—the prelate paused, and gathering up new energy, added in unfaltering accents, "I charge thee here, Sweyn the outlaw, that, moved by the fiend, thou didst bear off from God's house and violate a daughter of the Church—Algive, Abbess of Leominster!"

"And I," cried Siward, rising to the full height of his stature, "I, in the presence of these proceres, whose proudest title is *milites* or warriors—I charge Sweyn, son of Godwin, that, not in open field and hand to hand, but by felony and guile, he wrought the foul and abhorrent murder of his cousin, Beorn the Earl!"

At these two charges from men so eminent, the effect upon the audience was startling. While those not influenced by Godwin raised their eyes, sparkling with wrath and scorn, upon the wasted, yet still noble face of the eldest born, even those most zealous on behalf of that popular House evinced no sympathy for its heir. Some looked down abashed and mournful—some regarded the accused with a cold unpitying gaze. Only perhaps among the ceorls, at the end of the hall, might be seen some compassion on anxious faces; for before those deeds of crime had been bruited abroad, none among the sons of Godwin more blithe of mien and bold of hand, more honored and beloved, that Sweyn the outlaw. But the hush that succeeded the charges was appalling in its depth. Godwin himself shaded his face with his mantle, and only those close by could see that his breast heaved and his limbs trembled. The brothers had shrunk from the side of the accused, outlawed even amongst his kin—all save Harold, who, strong in his blameless name and beloved repute, advanced three strides amidst the silence, and, standing by his brother's side, lifted his commanding

brow above the seated judges, but he did not speak.

Then said Sweyn the Earl, strengthened by such solitary companionship in that hostile assemblage,—"I might answer that for these charges in the past, for deeds alleged as done eight long years ago, I have the King's grace, and the inlaw's right; and that in the Witans over which I as earl presided, no man was twice judged for the same offence. That I hold to be the law, in the great councils as the small."

"It is! it is!" exclaimed Godwin; his paternal feelings conquering his prudence and his decorous dignity. "Hold to it, my son!"

"I hold to it not," resumed the young earl, casting a haughty glance over the somewhat blank and disappointed faces of his foes, "for my law is *here*"—and he smote his heart—"and that condemns me not once alone, but evermore! Alred, O holy father, at whose knees I once confessed my every sin,—I blame thee not that thou first, in the Witan, liftest thy voice against me, though thou knowest that I loved Algive from youth upward; she, with her heart yet mine, was given in the last year of Hardicanute, when might was right, to the Church. I met her again, flushed with my victories over the Walloon kings, with power in my hand and passion in my veins. Deadly was my sin!—But what asked I? that vows compelled should be annulled; that the love of my youth might yet be tne wife of my manhood. Pardon, that I knew not then how eternal are the bonds ye of the Church have woven round those of whom, if ye fail of saints, ye may at least make martyrs!"

He paused, and his lip curled, and his eye shot wildfire; for in that moment his mother's blood was high within him, and he looked and thought, perhaps, as some heathen Dane, but the flash of the former man was momentary, and humbly smiting his breast, he murmured—"Avaunt, Satan!—yea, deadly was my sin! And the sin was mine alone; Algive, if stained, was blameless; she escaped—and—and died!

"The King was wroth; and first to strive against my pardon was Harold my brother, who now alone in my penitence stands by my side: he strove manfully and openly; I blamed *him* not: but Beorn, my cousin, desired my earldom, and he strove against me, wilily and in secret,—to my face kind, behind my back despiteful. I detected his falsehood, and meant to detain, but not to slay him. He lay bound in my ship; he reviled and he taunted me in the hour of my gloom; and when the blood of the sea-kings flowed in fire through my veins. And I lifted my axe in ire; and my men lifted theirs, and so,—and so!—Again I say—Deadly was my sin!

"Think not that I seek now to make less my guilt, as I sought when I deemed that life was yet long, and power was yet sweet. Since then I have known worldly evil, and worldly good,—the storm and the shine of life; I have swept the seas, a sea-king; I have battled with the Dane in his native land; I have almost grasped in my right hand, as I grasped in my dreams, the crown of my kinsman, Canute;—again, I have been a fugitive and an exile;—again, I have been inlawed, and Earl of all the lands from Isis to the Wye.* And whether in state or in penury,—whether in war or in peace, I have seen the pale face of the nun betrayed, and the gory wounds of the murdered man. Wherefore I come not here to plead for a pardon, which would console me not, but formally to dissever my kinsmen's cause from mine, which alone sullies and degrades it;—I come here to say, that, coveting not your acquittal, fearing not your judgment, I pronounce mine own doom. Cap of noble, and axe of warrior, I lay aside for ever; barefooted, and alone, I go hence to the Holy Sepulchre; there to assoil my soul, and implore that grace which cannot come from man! Harold, step forth in the place of Sweyn the first-born! And ye prelates and peers, milites and ministers, proceed to adjudge the living! To you, and to England, he who now quits you is the dead!"

He gathered his robe of state over his breast as a monk his gown, and looking neither to right nor to left, passed slowly down the hall, through the crowd, which made way for him in awe and silence; and it seemed to the assembly as if a cloud had gone from the face of day.

* More correctly of Oxford, Somerset, Berkshire, Gloucester, and Hereford.

And Godwin still stood with his face covered by his robe.

And Harold anxiously watched the faces of the assembly, and saw no relenting!

And Gurth crept to Harold's side.

And the gay Leofwine looked sad.

And the young Wolnoth turned pale and trembled.

And the fierce Tostig played with his golden chain.

And one low sob was heard, and it came from the breast of Alred the meek accuser, —God's firm but gentle priest.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS memorable trial ended, as the reader will have foreseen, in the formal renewal of Sweyn's outlawry, and the formal restitution of the Earl Godwin and his other sons to their lands and honors, with declarations imputing all the blame of the late dissensions to the foreign favorites, and sentence of banishment against them, except only, by way of a bitter mockery, some varlets of low degree, such as Humphrey Cock's-foot, and Richard, Son of Scrob.*

The return to power of this able and vigorous family was attended with an instantaneous effect upon the long-relaxed strings of the imperial government. Macbeth heard, and trembled in his moors; Gryffyth of Wales lit the fire-beacon on moel and craig. Earl Rolf was banished, but merely as a nominal concession to public opinion; his kinship to Edward sufficed to restore him soon, not only to England, but to the lordship of the Marches, and thither was he sent, with adequate force, against the Welch, who had half-repossessed themselves of the borders they harried. Saxon prelates and abbots replaced the Norman fugitives; and all were contented with the revolution, save the King, for the King lost his Norman friends, and regained his English wife.

In conformity with the usages of the time, hostages of the loyalty and faith of Godwin were required and conceded. They were selected from his own family; and the choice fell on Wolnoth, his son, and Haco, the son of Sweyn. As, when nearly all England may be said to have repassed to the hands of Godwin, it would have been an idle precaution to consign these hostages to the keeping of Edward, it was settled, after some discussion, that they should be placed in the Court of the Norman Duke until such time as the King, satisfied with the good faith of the family, should authorize their recall:— Fatal hostage, fatal ward and host!

It was some days after this national crisis, and order and peace were again established in city and land, forest and shire, when, at the setting of the sun, Hilda stood alone by the altar stone of Thor.

The orb was sinking red and lurid, amidst long cloud-wracks of vermeil and purple, and not one human form was seen in the landscape, save that tall and majestic figure by the Runic shrine and the Druid crommell. She was leaning both hands on her wand, or seid-staff, as it was called in the language of Scandinavian superstition, and bending slightly forward as in the attitude of listening or expectation. Long before any form appeared on the road below she seemed to be aware of coming footsteps, and probably her habits of life had sharpened her senses; for she smiled, muttered to herself, "Ere it sets!" and changing her posture, leant her arm on the altar, and rested her face upon her hand.

At length, two figures came up the road; they neared the hill; they saw her, and slowly ascended the knoll. The one was dressed in the serge of a pilgrim, and his cowl thrown back, showed the face where human beauty and human power lay ravaged and ruined by human passions. He upon whom the pilgrim lightly leaned was attired simply, without the brooch or bracelet common to thegns of high degree, yet his port was that of majesty, and his brow that of mild command. A greater contrast could not be conceived than that between these two men, yet

* Yet how little safe it is for the great to despise the low-born! This very Richard, son of Scrob, more euphoniously styled by the Normans Richard Fitz-Scrob, settled in Herefordshire (he was probably among the retainers of Earl Rolf), and on William's landing, became the chief and most active supporter of the invader in those districts. The sentence of banishment seems to have been mainly confined to the foreigners about the Court—for it is clear that many Norman landowners and priests were still left scattered throughout the country.

united by a family likeness. For the countenance of the last described was, though sorrowful at that moment, and indeed habitually not without a certain melancholy, wonderfully imposing from its calm and sweetness. There, no devouring passions had left the cloud or ploughed the line; but all the smooth loveliness of youth took dignity from the conscious resolve of man. The long hair, of a fair brown, with a slight tinge of gold, as the last sunbeams shot through its luxuriance, was parted from the temples, and fell in large waves half way to the shoulder. The eyebrows, darker in hue, arched and finely traced; the straight features not less manly than the Norman, but less strongly marked: the cheek, hardy with exercise and exposure, yet still retaining somewhat of youthful bloom under the pale bronze of its sunburnt surface: the form tall, not gigantic, and vigorous rather from perfect proportion and athletic habits than from breadth and bulk—were all singularly characteristic of the Saxon beauty in its highest and purest type. But what chiefly distinguished this personage, was that peculiar dignity, so simple, so sedate, which no pomp seems to dazzle, no danger to disturb; and which perhaps arises from a strong sense of self-dependence, and is connected with self-respect—a dignity common to the Indian and the Arab, and rare except in that state of society in which each man is a power in himself. The Latin tragic poet touches close upon that sentiment in the fine lines—

> "Rex est qui metuit nihil:
> Hoc regnum sibi quisque dat." *

So stood the brothers, Sweyn the outlaw and Harold the Earl, before the reputed prophetess. She looked on both with a steady eye, which gradually softened almost into tenderness, as it finally rested upon the pilgrim.

"And is it thus," she said at last, "that I see the first born of Godwin the fortunate, for whom so often I have tasked the thunder, and watched the setting sun? for whom my runes have been graven on the bark of the elm, and the Scin-læca* been called in pale splendor from the graves of the dead?"

"Hilda," said Sweyn, "not now will I accuse thee of the seeds thou hast sown: the harvest is gathered and the sickle is broken. Abjure thy dark Galdra,† and turn as I to the sole light in the future, which shines from the tomb of the Son Divine."

The Prophetess bowed her head and replied:—

"Belief cometh as the wind. Can the tree say to the wind, 'Rest thou on my boughs?' or Man to Belief, 'Fold thy wings on my heart!' Go where thy soul can find comfort, for thy life hath passed from its uses on earth. And when I would read thy fate, the runes are as blanks, and the waves sleep unstirred on the fountain. Go where the Fylgia,‡ whom Alfader gives to each at his birth, leads thee. Thou didst desire love that seemed shut from thee, and I predicted that thy love should awake from the charnel in which the creed that succeeds to the faith of our sires inters life in its bloom. And thou didst covet the fame of the Jarl and the Viking, and I blessed thine axe to thy hand, and wove the sail for thy masts. So long as man knows *desire*, can Hilda have power over his doom. But when the heart lies in ashes, I raise but a corpse, that at the hush of the charm falls again into its grave. Yet, come to me nearer, O Sweyn, whose cradle I rocked to the chaunt of my rhyme."

The outlaw turned aside his face, and obeyed.

She sighed as she took his passive hand in her own, and examined the lines on the palm. Then, as if by an involuntary impulse of fondness and pity, she put aside his cowl and kissed his brow.

"Thy skein is spun, and happier than the many who scorn, and the few who lament thee, thou shalt win where they lose. The steel shall not smite thee, the storm shall forbear thee, the goal that thou yearnest for thy steps shall attain. Night hallows the

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* SENECA, *Thyest.* Act ii.—"He is a king who fears nothing; that kingdom every man gives to himself."

* Scin-læca, literally a shining corpse; a species of apparition invoked by the witch or wizard.—See SHARON TURNER on *the Superstitions of the Anglo-Saxons*, b. ii. c. 14.

† *Galdra*, magic.

‡ *Fylgia*, tutelary divinity. See note (*h*) at the end.

ruin,—and peace to the shattered wrecks of the brave!"

The outlaw heard as if unmoved. But when he turned to Harold, who covered his face with his hand, but could not restrain the tears that flowed through the clasped fingers, a moisture came into his own wild, bright eyes, and he said, "Now, my brother, farewell, for no farther step shalt thou wend with me."

Harold started, opened his arms, and the outlaw fell upon his breast.

No sound was heard save a single sob, and so close was breast to breast, you could not say from whose heart it came. Then the outlaw wrenched himself from the embrace, and murmured, "And Haco—my son—motherless, fatherless—hostage in the land of the stranger! Thou wilt remember—thou wilt shield him; thou be to him mother, father in the days to come! So may the saints bless thee!" With these words he sprang down the hillock.

Harold bounded after him; but Sweyn, halting, said, mournfully, "Is this thy promise? Am I so lost that faith should be broken even with thy father's son?"

At that touching rebuke, Harold paused, and the outlaw passed his way alone. As the last glimpse of his figure vanished at the turn of the road, whence, on the second of May, the Norman Duke and the Saxon King had emerged side by side, the short twilight closed abruptly, and up from the far forest-land rose the moon.

Harold stood rooted to the spot, and still gazing on the space, when the Vala laid her hand on his arm.

"Behold, as the moon rises on the troubled gloaming, so rises the fate of Harold, as yon brief, human shadow, halting between light and darkness, passes away to-night. Thou art now the first-born of a House that unites the hopes of the Saxon with the fortunes of the Dane."

"Thinkest thou," said Harold, with a stern composure, "that I can have joy and triumph in a brother's exile and woe?"

"Not now, and not yet, will the voice of thy true nature be heard; but the warmth of the sun brings the thunder, and the glory of fortune wakes the storm of the soul."

"Kinswoman," said Harold, with a slight curl of his lip, "by me at least have thy prophecies ever passed as the sough of the air; neither in horror nor with faith do I think of thy incantations and charms; and I smile alike at the exorcism of the shaveling and the spells of the Saga. I have asked thee not to bless mine axe, nor weave my sail. No runic rhyme is on the sword-blade of Harold. I leave my fortunes to the chance of mine own cool brain and strong arm. Vala, between thee and me there is no bond."

The Prophetess smiled loftily.

"And what thinkest thou, O self-dependent! what thinkest thou is the fate which thy brain, and thine arm shall win?"

"The fate they have won already. I see no Beyond. The fate of a man sworn to guard his country, love justice, and do right."

The moon shone full on the heroic face of the young Earl as he spoke; and on its surface there seemed nought to belie the noble words. Yet, the Prophetess, gazing earnestly on that fair countenance, said, in a whisper, that, despite a reason singularly sceptical for the age in which it had been cultured, thrilled to the Saxon's heart, "Under that calm eye sleeps the soul of thy sire, and beneath that brow, so haught and so pure, works the genius that crowned the kings of the north in the lineage of thy mother the Dane."

"Peace!" said Harold, almost fiercely; then, as if ashamed of the weakness of his momentary irritation, he added, with a faint smile, "Let us not talk of these matters while my heart is still sad and away from the thoughts of the world, with my brother the lonely outlaw. Night is on us, and the ways are yet unsafe; for the king's troops, disbanded in haste, were made up of many who turn to robbers in peace. Alone, and unarmed, save my ateghar, I would crave a night's rest under thy roof; and,"—he hesitated, and a slight blush came over his cheek—"and I would fain see if your grandchild is as fair as when I last looked on her blue eyes, that then wept for Harold ere he went into exile."

"Her tears are not at her command, nor her smiles," said the Vala, solemnly; "her tears flow from the fount of thy sorrows, and

her smiles are the beams from thy joys. For know, O Harold! that Edith is thine earthly Fylgia; thy fate and her fate are as one. And vainly as man would escape from his shadow, would soul wrench itself from the soul that Skulda hath linked to his doom."

Harold made no reply; but his step, habitually slow, grew more quick and light, and this time his reason found no fault with the oracles of the Vala.

CHAPTER V.

As Hilda entered the hall, the various idlers accustomed to feed at her cost were about retiring, some to their homes in the vicinity, some, appertaining to the household, to the dormitories in the old Roman villa.

It was not the habit of the Saxon noble, as it was of the Norman, to put hospitality to profit, by regarding his guests in the light of armed retainers. Liberal as the Briton, the cheer of the board and the shelter of the roof were afforded with a hand equally unselfish and indiscriminate; and the doors of the more wealthy and munificent might be almost literally said to stand open from morn to eve.

As Harold followed the Vala across the vast atrium, his face was recognized, and a shout of enthusiastic welcome greeted the popular Earl. The only voices that did not swell that cry, were those of three monks from a neighboring convent, who chose to wink at the supposed practices of the Morthwyrtha,* from the affection they bore to her ale and mead, and the gratitude they felt for her ample gifts to their convent.

"One of the wicked House, brother," whispered the monk.

"Yea; mockers and scorners are Godwin and his lewd sons," answered the monk.

And all three sighed and scowled, as the door closed on the hostess and her stately guest.

Two tall and not ungraceful lamps lighted the same chamber in which Hilda was first presented to the reader. The handmaids were still at their spindles, and the white web nimbly shot as the mistress entered. She paused, and her brow knit, as she eyed the work.

"But three parts done?" she said, "weave fast, and weave strong."

Harold, not heeding the maids or their task, gazed inquiringly round, and from a nook near the window, Edith sprang forward with a joyous cry, and a face all glowing with delight—sprang forward, as if to the arms of a brother; but, within a step or so of that noble guest, she stopped short, and her eyes fell to the ground.

Harold held his breath in admiring silence. The child he had loved from her cradle stood before him as a woman. Even since we last saw her, in the interval between the spring and the autumn, the year had ripened the youth of the maiden, as it had mellowed the fruits of the earth; and her cheek was rosy with the celestial blush, and her form rounded to the nameless grace, which say that infancy is no more.

He advanced and took her hand, but for the first time in his life in their greetings, he neither gave nor received the kiss.

"You are no child now, Edith," said he, involuntarily; "but still set apart, I pray you, some remains of the old childish love for Harold."

Edith's charming lips smiled softly; she raised her eyes to his, and their innocent fondness spoke through happy tears.

But few words passed in the short interval between Harold's entrance and his retirement to the chamber prepared for him in haste. Hilda herself led him to a rude ladder which admitted to a room above, evidently added, by some Saxon lord, to the old Roman pile. The ladder showed the precaution of one accustomed to sleep in the midst of peril; for by a kind of windlass in the room, it could be drawn up at the inmate's will, and, so drawn, left below a dark and deep chasm, delving down to the foundations of the house; nevertheless the room itself had all the luxury of the time; the bedstead was quaintly carved, and of some rare wood; a trophy of arms—though very ancient, sedulously polished—hung on the wall. There were the small round shield

* *Morthwyrtha*, worshipper of the dead.

and spear of the earlier Saxon, with his vizorless helm, and the short curved knife or sæx,* from which some antiquarians deem that the Saxish men take their renowned name.

Edith, following Hilda, proffered to the guest, on a salver of gold, spiced wines and confections; while Hilda, silently and unperceived, waved her seid staff over the bed, and rested her pale hand on the pillow.

"Nay, sweet cousin," said Harold, smiling, "this is not one of the fashions of old, but rather, methinks, borrowed from the Frankish manners in the court of King Edward."

"Not so, Harold," answered Hilda, quickly turning; "such was ever the ceremony due to Saxon king, when he slept in a subject's house, ere our kinsmen the Danes introduced that unroyal wassail, which left subject and king unable to hold or to quaff cup, when the board was left for the bed."

"Thou rebukest, O Hilda, too tauntingly, the pride of Godwin's House, when thou givest to his homely son the ceremonial of a king. But, so served, I envy not kings, fair Edith."

He took the cup, raised it to his lips, and when he placed it on the small table by his side, the women had left the chamber, and he was alone. He stood for some minutes absorbed in reverie, and his soliloquy ran somewhat thus:—

"Why said the Vala that Edith's fate was inwoven with mine? And why did I believe and bless the Vala, when she so said? Can Edith ever be my wife? The monk-king designs her for the cloister—Woe, and well-a-day!—Sweyn, Sweyn, let thy doom forewarn me! And if I stand up in my place and say, 'Give age and grief to the cloister—youth and delight to man's hearth,' what will answer the monks? 'Edith cannot be thy wife, son of Godwin, for faint and scarce traced though your affinity of blood, ye are within the banned degrees of the Church. Edith may be wife to another, if thou wilt,—barren spouse of the Church, or mother of children who lisp not Harold's name as their father.' Out on these priests with their mummeries, and out on their war upon human hearts!"

His fair brow grew stern and fierce as the Norman Duke's in his ire; and had you seen him at that moment you would have seen the true brother of Sweyn. He broke from his thoughts with the strong effort of a man habituated to self-control, and advanced to the narrow window, opened the lattice, and looked out.

The moon was in all her splendor. The long deep shadows of the breathless forest checkered the silvery whiteness of open sward and intervening glade. Ghostly arose on the knoll before him the gray columns of the mystic Druid,—dark and indistinct the bloody altar of the Warrior god. But there his eye was arrested; for whatever is least distinct and defined in a landscape has the charm that is the strongest; and, while he gazed, he thought that a pale phosphoric light broke from the mound with the bautastein, that rose by the Teuton altar. He *thought*, for he was not sure that it was not some cheat of the fancy. Gazing still, in the centre of that light, there appeared to gleam forth for one moment, a form of superhuman height. It was the form of a man, that seemed clad in arms like those on the wall, leaning on a spear, whose point was lost behind the shafts of the crommell. And the face grew in that moment distinct from the light which shimmered around it, a face large as some early god's, but stamped with unutterable and solemn woe. He drew back a step, passed his hand over his eyes, and looked again. Light and figure alike had vanished; nought was seen save the gray columns and the dim fane. The Earl's lip curved in derision of his weakness. He closed the lattice, undressed, knelt for a moment or so by the bed-side, and his prayer was brief and simple, nor accompanied with the crossings and signs customary in his age. He rose, extinguished the lamp, and threw himself on the bed.

The moon, thus relieved of the lamp-light, came clear and bright through the room, shone on the trophied arms, and fell upon Harold's face, casting its brightness on the pillow on which the Vala had breathed her

* It is a disputed question whether the sæx of the earliest Saxon invaders was a long or short curved weapon,—nay, whether it was curved or straight; but the author sides with those who contend that it was a short, crooked weapon, easily concealed by a cloak, and similar to those depicted on the banner of the East Saxons.

charm. And Harold slept—slept long,—his face calm, his breathing regular: but ere the moon sunk and the dawn rose, the features were dark and troubled, the breath came by gasps, the brow was knit, and the teeth clenched.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE HEATHEN ALTAR AND THE SAXON CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

While Harold sleeps, let us here pause to survey for the first time the greatness of that House to which Sweyn's exile had left him the heir. The fortunes of Godwin had been those which no man not eminently versed in the science of his kind can achieve. Though the fable which some modern historians of great name have repeated and detailed, as to his early condition as the son of a cow-herd, is utterly groundless,* and he belonged to a house all-powerful at the time of his youth, he was unquestionably the builder of his own greatness. That he should rise so high in the early part of his career was less remarkable than that he should have so long continued the possessor of a power and state in reality more than regal.

But, as has been before implied, Godwin's civil capacities were more prominent than his warlike. And this it is which invests him with that peculiar interest which attracts us to those who knit our modern intelligence with the past. In that dim world before the Norman deluge, we are startled to recognize the gifts that ordinarily distinguish a man of peace in a civilized age.

His father, Wolnoth, had been "Childe"† of the South Saxons, or thegn of Sussex, a nephew of Edric Streone, Earl of Mercia, the unprincipled but able minister of Ethelred, who betrayed his master to Canute, by whom, according to most authorities, he was righteously, though not very legally, slain as a reward for the treason.

"I promised," said the Dane king, "to set thy head higher than other men's, and I keep my word." The trunkless head was set on the gates of London.

Wolnoth had quarrelled with his uncle Brightric, Edric's brother, and before the arrival of Canute, had betaken himself to the piracy of a sea chief, seduced twenty of the king's ships, plundered the southern coasts, burnt the royal navy, and then his history disappears from the chronicles; but immediately afterwards the great Danish army, called Thurkell's Host, invaded the coast, and kept their chief station on the Thames. Their victorious arms soon placed the country almost at their command. The traitor Edrick joined them with a power of more than 10,000 men; and it is probable enough that the ships of Wolnoth had before this time melted amicably into the armament of the Danes. If this, which seems the most likely conjecture, be received, Godwin, then a mere youth, would naturally have commenced his career in the cause of Canute; and as the son of a formidable chief of thegn's

* See note (*i*) at the end.

† *Saxon Chronicle*, Florence Wigorn. Sir F. Palgrave says that the title of Childe is equivalent to that of Atheling. With that remarkable appreciation of evidence which generally makes him so invaluable as a judicial authority where accounts are contradictory, Sir F. Palgrave discards with silent contempt the absurd romance of Godwin's station of herdsman, to which, upon such very fallacious and flimsy authorities, Thierry and Sharon Turner have been betrayed into lending their distinguished names.

rank, and even as kinsman to Edric, who, whatever his crimes, must have retained a party it was wise to conciliate, Godwin's favor with Canute, whose policy would lead him to show marked distinction to any able Saxon follower, ceases to be surprising.

The son of Wolnoth accompanied Canute in his military expedition to the Scandinavian continent, and here a signal victory, planned by Godwin, and executed solely by himself and the Saxon band under his command, without aid from Canute's Danes, made the most memorable military exploit of his life, and confirmed his rising fortunes.

Edric, though he is said to have been low born, had married the sister of King Ethelred; and as Godwin advanced in fame, Canute did not disdain to bestow his own sister in marriage on the eloquent favorite, who probably kept no small portion of the Saxon population to their allegiance. On the death of this, his first wife, who bore him but one son * (who died by accident), he found a second spouse in the same royal house; and the mother of his six living sons and two daughters was the niece of his king, and sister of Sweyn, who subsequently filled the throne of Denmark.

After the death of Canute, the Saxon's predilections in favor of the Saxon line became apparent; but it was either his policy or his principles always to defer to the popular will as expressed in the national council; and on the preference given by the Witan to Harold the son of Canute over the heirs of Ethelred, he yielded his own inclinations. The great power of the Danes, and the amicable fusion of their race with the Saxon which had now taken place, are apparent in this decision; for not only did Earl Leofric, of Mercia, though himself a Saxon (as well as the Earl of Northumbria, with the thegns north of the Thames), declare for Harold the Dane, but the citizens of London were of the same party; and Godwin represented little more than the feeling of his own principality of Wessex.

From that time, Godwin, however, became identified with the English cause; and even many who believed him guilty of some share in the murder, or at least the betrayal of Alfred, Edward's brother, sought excuses in the disgust with which Godwin had regarded the foreign retinue that Alfred had brought with him, as if to owe his throne * to Norman swords, rather than to English hearts.

Hardicanute, who succeeded Harold, whose memory he abhorred, whose corpse he disinterred and flung into a fen,† had been chosen by the unanimous council both of English and Danish thegns; and despite Hardicanute's first vehement accusations of Godwin, the Earl still remained throughout that reign as powerful as in the two preceding it. When Hardicanute dropped down dead at a marriage banquet, it was Godwin who placed Edward upon the throne; and that great Earl must either have been conscious of his innocence of the murder of Edward's brother, or assured of his own irresponsible power, when he said to the prince who knelt at his feet, and, fearful of the difficulties in his way, implored the Earl to aid his abdication of the throne and return to Normandy—

"You are the son of Ethelred, grandson of Edgar. Reign, it is your duty; better to live in glory than die in exile. You are of mature years, and having known sorrow and need, can better feel for your people. Rely on me, and there will be none of the difficulties you dread; whom I favor, England favors."

And shortly afterwards, in the national assembly, Godwin won Edward his throne. "Powerful in speech, powerful in bringing over people to what he desired, some yielded to his words, some to bribes."‡ Verily, Godwin was a man to have risen as high had he lived later!

So Edward reigned, and agreeably, it is said, with previous stipulations, married the daughter of his king-maker. Beautiful as Edith the Queen was in mind and in person,

* This first wife, Thyra, was of very unpopular repute with the Saxons. She was accused of sending young English persons as slaves into Denmark, and is said to have been killed by lightning.

* It is just however to Godwin to say, that there is no *proof* of his share in this barbarous transaction; the presumptions, on the contrary, are in his favor; but the authorities are too contradictory, and the whole event too obscure, to enable us unhesitatingly to confirm the acquittal he received in his own age, and from his own national tribunal.

† *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*

‡ William of Malmesbury.

Edward apparently loved her not. She dwelt in his palace, his wife only in name.

Tostig (as we have seen) had married the daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, sister to Matilda, wife to the Norman Duke: and thus the House of Godwin was triply allied to princely lineage—the Danish, the Saxon, the Flemish. And Tostig might have said, as in his heart William the Norman said, "My children shall descend from Charlemagne and Alfred."

Godwin's life, though thus outwardly brilliant, was too incessantly passed in public affairs and politic schemes to allow the worldly man much leisure to watch over the nurture and rearing of the bold spirits of his sons. Githa his wife, the Dane, a woman with a haughty but noble spirit, imperfect education, and some of the wild and lawless blood derived from her race of heathen sea-kings, was more fitted to stir their ambition, and inflame their fancies, than curb their tempers and mould their hearts.

We have seen the career of Sweyn; but Sweyn was an angel of light compared to his brother Tostig. He who *can* be penitent has ever something lofty in his original nature; but Tostig was remorseless as the tiger, as treacherous and as fierce. With less intellectual capacities than any of his brothers, he had more personal ambition than all put together. A kind of effeminate vanity, not uncommon with daring natures (for the bravest races and the bravest soldiers are usually the vainest; the desire to shine is as visible in the fop as in the hero), made him restless both for command and notoriety. "May I ever be in the mouths of men," was his favorite prayer. Like his maternal ancestry, the Danes, he curled his long hair, and went as a bridegroom to the feast of the ravens.

Two only of that house had studied the Humane Letters, which were no longer disregarded by the princes of the Continent; they were the sweet sister, the eldest of the family, fading fast in her loveless home, and Harold.

But Harold's mind,—in which what we call common sense was carried to genius,—a mind singularly practical and sagacious, like his father's, cared little for theological learning and priestly legend—for all that poesy of religion in which the Woman was wafted from the sorrows of earth.

Godwin himself was no favorite of the Church, and had seen too much of the abuses of the Saxon priesthood (perhaps, with few exceptions, the most corrupt and illiterate in all Europe, which is saying much,) to instil into his children that reverence for the spiritual authority which existed abroad; and the enlightenment, which in him was experience in life, was in Harold, betimes, the result of study and reflection. The few books of the classical world then within reach of the student opened to the young Saxon views of human duties and human responsibilities utterly distinct from the unmeaning ceremonials and fleshly mortifications in which even the higher theology of that day placed the elements of virtue. He smiled in scorn when some Dane, whose life had been passed in the alternate drunkenness of wine and of blood, thought he had opened the gates of heaven by bequeathing lands gained by a robber's sword, to pamper the lazy sloth of some fifty monks. If those monks had presumed to question his own actions, his disdain would have been mixed with simple wonder that men so besotted in ignorauce, and who could not construe the Latin of the very prayers they pattered, should presume to be the judges of educated men. It is possible—for his nature was earnest—that a pure and enlightened clergy, that even a clergy, though defective in life, zealous in duty and cultivated in mind,—such a clergy as Alfred sought to found, and as Lanfranc endeavored (not without some success) to teach—would have bowed his strong sense to that grand and subtle truth which dwells in spiritual authority.

But as it was, he stood aloof from the rude superstition of his age, and early in life made himself the arbiter of his own conscience. Reducing his religion to the simplest elements of our creed, he found rather in the books of Heathen authors than in the lives of the Saints, his notions of the larger morality which relates to the citizen and the man. The love of country; the sense of justice; fortitude in adverse, and temperance in prosperous fortune, became portions of his very mind. Unlike his father, he played no actor's part in those

qualities which had won him the popular heart. He was gentle and affable; above all, he was fair-dealing and just, not because it was politic to *seem*, but his nature to *be*, so.

Nevertheless, Harold's character, beautiful and sublime in many respects as it was, had its strong leaven of human imperfection in that very self-dependence which was born of his reason and his pride. In resting so solely on man's perceptions of the right, he lost one attribute of the true hero—*faith*. We do not mean that word in the religious sense alone, but in the more comprehensive. He did not rely on the Celestial Something pervading all nature, never seen, only felt when duly courted, stronger and lovelier than what eye could behold and mere reason could embrace. Believing, it is true, in God, he lost those fine links that unite God to man's secret heart, and which are woven alike from the simplicity of the child and the wisdom of the poet. To use a modern illustration, his large mind was a "cupola lighted from below."

His bravery, though inflexible as the fiercest sea-king's, when need arose for its exercise, was not his prominent characteristic. He despised the brute valor of Tostig,—his bravery was a necessary part of a firm and balanced manhood—the bravery of Hector, not Achilles. Constitutionally averse to bloodshed, he could seem timid where daring only gratified a wanton vanity, or aimed at a selfish object. On the other hand, if *duty* demanded daring, no danger could deter, no policy warp him;—he could seem rash; he could even seem merciless. In the what *ought* to be, he understood a *must* be.

And it was natural to this peculiar, yet thoroughly English temperament, to be, in action, rather steadfast and patient than quick and ready. Placed in perils familiar to him, nothing could exceed his vigor and address; but if taken unawares, and before his judgment could come to his aid, he was liable to be surprised into error. Large minds are rarely quick, unless they have been corrupted into unnatural vigilance by the necessities of suspicion. But a nature more thoroughly unsuspecting, more frank, trustful, and genuinely loyal than that young Earl's, it was impossible to conceive. All these attributes considered, we have the key to much of Harold's character and conduct in the later events of his fated and tragic life.

But with this temperament, so manly and simple, we are not to suppose that Harold, while rejecting the superstitions of one class, was so far beyond his time as to reject those of another. No son of fortune, no man placing himself and the world in antagonism, can ever escape from some belief in the Invisible. Cæsar could ridicule and profane the mystic rites of Roman mythology, but he must still believe in his *fortune*, as in a god. And Harold, in his very studies, seeing the freest and boldest minds of antiquity subjected to influences akin to those of his Saxon forefathers, felt less shame in yielding to *them*, vain as they might be, than in monkish impostures so easily detected. Though hitherto he had rejected all direct appeal to the magic devices of Hilda, the sound of her dark sayings, heard in childhood, still vibrated on his soul as man. Belief in omens, in days lucky or unlucky, in the stars, was universal in every class of the Saxon. Harold had his own fortunate day, the day of his nativity, the 14th of October. All enterprises undertaken on that day had hitherto been successful. He believed in the virtue of that day as Cromwell believed in his 3d of September. For the rest, we have described him as he was in that part of his career in which he is now presented. Whether altered by fate and circumstances, time will show. As yet, no selfish ambition leagued with the natural desire of youth and intellect, for their fair share of fame and power. His patriotism, fed by the example of Greek and Roman worthies, was genuine, pure, and ardent; he could have stood in the pass with Leonidas, or leaped into the gulf with Curtius.

CHAPTER II.

At dawn, Harold woke from uneasy and broken slumbers, and his eyes fell upon the face of Hilda, large, and fair, and unutterably calm, as the face of Egyptian sphinx.

"Have thy dreams been prophetic, son of Godwin?" said the Vala.

"Our Lord forfend," replied the Earl, with unusual devoutness.

"Tell them, and let me read the rede; sense dwells in the voices of the night."

Harold mused, and after a short pause, he said:

"Methinks, Hilda, I can myself explain how those dreams came to haunt me."

Then raising himself on his elbow, he continued, while he fixed his clear penetrating eyes upon his hostess:—

"Tell me frankly, Hilda, didst thou not cause some light to shine on yonder knoll, by the mound and stone, within the temple of the Druids?"

But if Harold had suspected himself to be the dupe of some imposture, the thought vanished when he saw the look of keen interest, even of awe, which Hilda's face instantly assumed.

"Didst thou see a light, son of Godwin, by the altar of Thor, and over the bautastein of the mighty dead? a flame, lambent and livid, like moonbeams collected over snow?"

"So seemed to me the light."

"No human hand ever kindled that flame, which announces the presence of the Dead," said Hilda, with a tremulous voice; "though seldom, uncompelled by the seid and the rune, does the spectre itself warn the eyes of the living."

"What shape, or what shadow of shape, does that spectre assume?"

"It rises in the midst of the flame, pale as the mist on the mountain, and vast as the giants of old; with the sæx, and the spear, and the shield of the sons of Woden.—Thou hast seen the Scin-læca," continued Hilda, looking full on the face of the Earl.

"If thou deceivest me not," began Harold, doubting still.

"Deceive thee! not to save the crown of the Saxon dare I mock the might of the dead. Knowest thou not—or hath thy vain lore stood in place of the lore of thy fathers—that where a hero of old is buried, his treasures lie in his grave; that over that grave is at times seen at night the flame that thou sawest, and the dead in his image of air? Oft seen in the days that are gone, when the dead and the living had one faith—were one race; now never marked, but for portent, and prophecy, and doom:—glory or woe to the eyes that see! On yon knoll, Æsc (the first-born of Cerdic, that Father-King of the Saxons,) has his grave where the mound rises green, and the stone gleams wan, by the altar of Thor. He smote the Britons in their temple, and he fell smiting. They buried him in his arms, and with the treasures his right hand had won. Fate hangs on the house of Cerdic, or the realm of the Saxon, when Woden calls the læca of his son from the grave."

Hilda, much troubled, bent her face over her clasped hands, and, rocking to and fro, muttered some runes unintelligible to the ear of her listener. Then she turned to him, commandingly, and said:—

"Thy dreams now, indeed, are oracles, more true than living Vala could charm with the wand, and the rune: Unfold them."

Thus adjured, Harold resumed:—

"Methought, then, that I was on a broad, level plain, in the noon of day; all was clear to my eye, and glad to my heart. I was alone, and went on my way rejoicing. Suddenly the earth opened under my feet, and I feel deep, fathom-deep;—deep, as if to that central pit, which our heathen sires called Niffelheim—the Home of Vapor—the hell of the dead who die without glory. Stunned by the fall, I lay long, locked as in a dream in the midst of a dream. When I opened my eyes, behold I was girt round with dead men's bones; and the bones moved round me, undulating, as the dry leaves that wirble round in the winds of the winter. And from the midst of them peered a trunkless skull, and on the skull was a mitre, and from the yawning jaws a voice came hissing, as a serpent's hiss, 'Harold, the scorner, thou art ours!' Then, as from the buzz of an army, came voices multitudinous, 'Thou art ours!' I sought to rise, and behold my limbs were bound, and the gyves were fine and frail, as the web of the gossamer, and they weighed on me like chains of iron. And I felt an anguish of soul that no words can speak—an anguish both of horror and shame; and my manhood seemed to ooze from me, and I was weak as a child new born. Then suddenly there rushed forth a freezing wind, as from an air of ice, and the bones from their whirl stood still, and the buzz ceased, and the mitred skull grinned on

me still and voiceless; and serpents darted their arrowy tongues from the eyeless sockets. And lo, before me stood (O Hilda, I see it now!) the form of the spectre that had risen from yonder knoll. With his spear, and sæx, and his shield, he stood before me; and his face, though pale as that of one long dead, was stern as the face of a warrior in the van of armed men; he stretched his hand, and he smote his sæx on his shield, and the clang sounded hollow; the gyves broke at the clash—I sprang to my feet, and I stood side by side with the phantom, dauntless. Then, suddenly, the mitre on the skull changed to a helm; and where the skull had grinned, trunkless and harmless, stood a shape like War, made incarnate;—a Thing above giants, with its crest to the stars, and its form an eclipse between the sun and the day. The earth changed to ocean, and the ocean was blood, and the ocean seemed deep as the seas where the whales sport in the North, but the surge rose not to the knee of that measureless image. And the ravens came round it from all parts of the heaven, and the vultures with dead eyes and dull scream. And all the bones, before scattered and shapeless, sprung to life and to form, some monks, and some warriors; and there was a hoot, and a hiss, and a roar, and the storm of arms. And a broad pennon rose out of the sea of blood, and from the clouds came a pale hand, and it wrote on the pennon, 'Harold the Accursed!' Then said the stern shape by my side, 'Harold, fearest thou the dead men's bones?' and its voice was as a trumpet that gives strength to the craven, and I answered, 'Niddering, indeed, were Harold, to fear the bones of the dead!'

"As I spoke, as if hell had burst loose, came a gibber of scorn, and all vanished at once, save the ocean of blood. Slowly came from the north, over the sea, a bird like a raven, save that it was blood-red, like the ocean; and there came from the south, swimming towards me, a lion. And I looked to the spectre; and the pride of war had gone ftom its face, which was so sad that methought I forgot raven and lion, and wept to see it. Then the spectre took me in its vast arms, and its breath froze my veins, and it kissed my brow and my lips, and said, gently and fondly, as my mother in some childish sickness, 'Harold, my best beloved, mourn not. Thou hast all which the sons of Woden dreamed in their dreams of Valhalla!' Thus saying, the form receded slowly, slowly, still gazing on me with its sad eyes. I stretched forth my hand to detain it, and in my grasp was a shadowy sceptre. And, lo! round me, as if from the earth, sprang up thegns and chiefs, in their armor; and a board was spread, and a wassail was blithe around me. So my heart felt cheered and light, and in my hand was still the sceptre. And we feasted long and merrily; but over the feast flapped the wings of the blood-red raven, and, over the blood-red sea beyond, swam the lion, near and near. And in the heavens there were two stars, one pale and steadfast, the other rushing and luminous; and a shadowy hand pointed from the cloud to the pale star, and a voice said, 'Lo, Harold! the star that shone on thy birth.' And another hand pointed to the luminous star, and another voice said, 'Lo, the star that shone on the birth of the victor.' Then, lo! the bright star grew fiercer and larger; and, rolling on with a hissing sound, as when iron is dipped into water, it rushed over the disk of the mournful planet, and the whole heavens seemed on fire. So methought the dream faded away, and in fading, I heard a full swell of music, as the swell of an anthem in an aisle; a music like that which but once in my life I heard; when I stood in the train of Edward, in the halls of Winchester, the day they crowned him king."

Harold ceased, and the Vala slowly lifted her head from her bosom, and surveyed him in profound silence, and with a gaze that seemed vacant and meaningless.

"Why dost thou look on me thus, and why art thou so silent?" asked the Earl.

"The cloud is on my sight, and the burthen is on my soul, and I cannot read thy rede," murmured the Vala. "But morn, the ghost-chaser, that waketh life, the action, charms into slumber life, the thought. As the stars pale at the rising of the sun, so fade the lights of the soul when the buds revive in the dews, and the lark sings to the day. In thy dream lies thy future, as the wing of the moth in the web of the changing worm; but, whether for weal or for woe,

thou shalt burst through thy mesh, and spread thy plumes in the air. Of myself I know nought. Await the hour when Skulda shall pass into the soul of her servant, and thy fate shall rush from my lips as the rush of the waters from the heart of the cave."

"I am content to abide," said Harold, with his wonted smile, so calm and so lofty; "but I cannot promise thee that I shall heed thy rede, or obey thy warning, when my reason hath awoke, as while I speak it awakens, from the fumes of the fancy and the mists of the night."

The Vala sighed heavily, but made no answer.

CHAPTER III.

Githa, Earl Godwin's wife, sate in her chamber, and her heart was sad. In the room was one of her sons, the one dearer to her than all, Wolnoth, her darling. For the rest of her sons were stalwart and strong of frame, and in their infancy she had known not a mother's fears. But Wolnoth had come into the world before his time, and sharp had been the travail of the mother, and long between life and death the struggle of the newborn babe. And his cradle had been rocked with a trembling knee, and his pillow been bathed with hot tears. Frail had been his childhood—a thing that hung on her care; and now, as the boy grew, blooming and strong, into youth, the mother felt that she had given life twice to her child. Therefore was he more dear to her than the rest; and, therefore, as she gazed upon him now, fair and smiling, and hopeful, she mourned for him more than for Sweyn, the outcast and criminal, on his pilgrimage of woe, to the waters of Jordan, and the tomb of our Lord. For Wolnoth, selected as the hostage for the faith of his house, was to be sent from her arms to the Court of William the Norman. And the youth smiled and was gay, choosing vestment and mantle, and ateghars of gold, that he might be flaunting and brave in the halls of knighthood and beauty,—the school of the proudest chivalry of the Christian world. Too young, and too thoughtless, to share the wise hate of his elders for the manners and forms of the foreigners, their gaiety and splendor, as his boyhood had seen them, relieving the gloom of the cloister court, and contrasting the spleen and the rudeness of the Saxon temperament, had dazzled his fancy and half Normanized his mind. A proud and happy boy was he, to go as hostage for the faith, and representative of the rank, of his mighty kinsmen; and step into manhood in the eyes of the dames of Rouen.

By Wolnoth's side stood his young sister, Thyra, a mere infant; and her innocent sympathy with her brother's pleasure in gaud and toy saddened Githa yet more.

"O my son!" said the troubled mother, "why, of all my children, have they chosen thee? Harold is wise against danger, and Tostig is fierce against foes, and Gurth is too loving to wake hate in the sternest, and from the mirth of sunny Leofwine sorrow glints aside, as the shaft from the sheen of a shield. But thou, thou, O beloved!—cursed be the king that chose thee, and cruel was the father that forgot the light of the mother's eyes!"

"Tut, mother the dearest," said Wolnoth, pausing from the contemplation of a silk robe, all covered with broidered peacocks, which had been sent him as a gift from his sister the Queen, and wrought with her own fair hands; for a notable needle-woman, despite her sage lere, was the wife of the Saint King, as sorrowful women mostly are,—"Tut! the bird must leave the nest when the wings are fledged. Harold the eagle, Tostig the kite, Gurth the ring-dove, and Leofwine the stare. See, my wings are the richest of all, mother, and bright is the sun in which thy peacock shall spread his pranked plumes."

Then observing that his liveliness provoked no smile from his mother, he approached, and said more seriously,—

"Bethink thee, mother mine. No other choice was left to king or to father. Harold, and Tostig, and Leofwine, have their lordships and offices. Their posts are fixed, and they stand as the columns of our house. And Gurth is so young, and so Saxish, and so the shadow of Harold, that his hate to the Norman is a bye-word already among our youths; for hate is the more marked in a temper of love, as the blue of this border seems black against the white of the woof.

But *I*;—the good king knows that I shall be welcome, for the Norman knights love Wolnoth, and I have spent hours by the knees of Montgommeri and Grantmesnil, listening to the feats of Rolfganger, and playing with their gold chains of knighthood. And the stout Count himself shall knight me, and I shall come back with the spurs of gold which thy ancestors, the brave Kings of Norway and Daneland, were ere knighthood was known. Come, kiss me, my mother, and come see the brave falcons Harold has sent me:—true Welch!"

Githa rested her face on her son's shoulder, and her tears blinded her. The door opened gently, and Harold entered; and with the Earl, a pale dark-haired boy, Haco, the son of Sweyn.

But Githa, absorbed in her darling Wolnoth, scarce saw the grandchild reared afar from her knees, and hurried at once to Harold. In his presence she felt comfort and safety; for Wolnoth leant on her heart, and her heart leant on Harold.

"O son, son!" she cried, "firmest of hand, surest of faith, and wisest of brain, in the house of Godwin, tell me that he yonder, he thy young brother, risks no danger in the halls of the Normans!"

"Not more than in these, mother," answered Harold, soothing her, with caressing lip and gentle tone. "Fierce and ruthless, men say, is William the Duke against foes with their swords in their hands, but debonnair and mild to the gentle,* frank host and kind lord. And these Normans have a code of their own, more grave than all morals, more binding than even their fanatic religion. Thou knowest it well, mother, for it comes from thy race of the North, and this code of *honor*, they call it, makes Wolnoth's head as sacred as the relics of a saint set in zimmes. Ask only, my brother, when thou comest in sight of the Norman Duke, ask only 'the kiss of peace,' and, that kiss on thy brow, thou wilt sleep more safely than if all the banners of England waved over thy couch." †

"But how long shall the exile be?" asked Githa, comforted.

Harold's brow fell.

"Mother, not even to cheer thee will I deceive. The time of the hostageship rests with the King and the Duke. As long as the one affects fear from the race of Godwin, as long as the other feigns care for such priests or such knights as were not banished from the realm, being not courtiers, but scattered wide and far in convent and homestead, so long will Wolnoth and Haco be guest in the Norman Halls."

Githa wrung her hands.

"But comfort, my mother; Wolnoth is young, his eye is keen, and his spirit prompt and quick. He will mark these Norman captains, he will learn their strength and their weakness, their manner of war, and he will come back, not as Edward the King came, a lover of things un-Saxon, but able to warn and to guide us against the plots of the camp-court, which threatens more, year by year, the peace of the world. And he will see there arts we may worthily borrow: not the cut of a tunic, and the fold of a gonna, but the arts of men who found states and build nations. William the Duke is splendid and wise; merchants tell us how crafts thrive under his iron hand, and warmen say that his forts are constructed with skill and his battle-schemes planned as the mason plans key-stone and arch, with weight portioned out to the prop, and the force of the hand made tenfold by the science of the brain. So that the boy will return to us a man round and complete, a teacher of graybeards, and the sage of his kin; fit for earldom and rule, fit for glory and England. Grieve not, daughter of the Dane kings, that thy son, the best loved, hath nobler school and wider field than his brothers."

This appeal touched the proud heart of the niece of Canute the Great, and she almost forgot the grief of her love in the hope of her ambition.

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* So Robert of Gloucester says pithily of William, "Kyng Wylliam was to mild men debonnere ynou."—HEARNE, v. ii. p. 309.

† This kiss of peace was held singularly sacred by the Normans, and all the more knightly races of the continent. Even the craftiest dissimulator, designing fraud, and stratagem, and murder to a foe, would not, to gain his ends, betray the pledge of the kiss of peace. When Henry II. consented to meet Becket after his return from Rome, and promised to remedy all of which his prelate complained, he struck prophetic dismay into Becket's heart by evading the kiss of peace.

She dried her tears and smiled upon Wolnoth, and already, in the dreams of a mother's vanity, saw him great as Godwin in council, and prosperous as Harold in the field. Nor, half Norman as he was, did the young man seem insensible of the manly and elevated patriotism of his brother's hinted lessons, though he felt they implied reproof. He came to the Earl, whose arm was round his mother, and said with a frank heartiness not usual to a nature somewhat frivolous and irresolute—

"Harold, thy tongue could kindle stones into men, and warm those men into Saxons. Thy Wolnoth shall not hang his head with shame when he comes back to our merrie land with shaven locks and spurs of gold. For if thou doubtest his race from his look, thou shalt put thy right hand on his heart, and feel England beat there in every pulse."

"Brave words, and well spoken," cried the Earl, and he placed his hand on the boy's head as in benison.

Till then, Haco had stood apart, conversing with the infant Thyra, whom his dark, mournful face awed and yet touched, for she nestled close to him, and put her little hand in his; but now, inspired no less than his cousin by Harold's noble speech, he came proudly forward by Wolnoth's side, and said—

"I, too, am English, and I have the name of Englishman to redeem."

Ere Harold could reply, Githa exclaimed—

"Leave there thy right hand on my child's head, and say simply,—'By my troth and my plight, if the Duke detain Wolnoth, son of Githa, against just plea, and King's assent to his return, I, Harold, will, failing letter and nuncius, cross the seas, to restore the child to the mother.'"

Harold hesitated.

A sharp cry of reproach that went to his heart broke from Githa's lips.

"Ah! cold and self-heeding, wilt thou send him to bear a peril from which thou shrinkest thyself?"

"By my troth and my plight, then," said the Earl, "if, fair time elapsed, peace in England, without plea of justice, and against my king's fiat, Duke William of Normandy detain the hostages,—thy son and this dear boy, more sacred and more dear to me for his father's woes,—I will cross the seas to restore the child to the mother, the fatherless to his fatherland. So help me, all-seeing One, Amen and Amen!"

CHAPTER IV.

We have seen, in an earlier part of this record, that Harold possessed, amongst his numerous and more stately possessions, a house, not far from the old Roman dwelling-place of Hilda. And in this residence he now (save when with the king) made his chief abode. He gave as the reasons for his selection, the charm it took, in his eyes, from that signal mark of affection which his ceorls had rendered him, in purchasing the house and tilling the ground in his absence; and more especially the convenience of its vicinity to the new palace at Westminster; for by Edward's special desire, while the other brothers repaired to their different domains, Harold remained near his royal person. To use the words of the great Norwegian chronicler, "Harold was always with the Court itself, and nearest to the king in all service." "The king loved him very much, and kept him as his own son, for he had no children."* This attendance on Edward was naturally most close at the restoration to power of the Earl's family. For Harold, mild and conciliating, was, like Alred, a great peacemaker, and Edward had never cause to complain of him, as he believed he had of the rest of that haughty house. But the true spell which made dear to Harold the rude building of timber, with its doors open all day to his lithsmen, when with a light heart he escaped from the halls of Westminster, was the fair face of Edith his neighbor. The impression which this young girl had made upon Harold seemed to partake of the strength of a fatality. For Harold had loved her before the marvellous beauty of her womanhood began; and, occupied from his earliest youth in grave and earnest affairs, his heart had never been frittered away on the mean and frivolous affections of

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* Snorro Sturleson's *Heimskringla*.—Laing's Translation, pp. 75–77.

the idle. Now, in that comparative leisure of his stormy life, he was naturally most open to the influence of a charm more potent than all the glamoury of Hilda.

The autumn sun shone through the golden glades of the forest-land, when Edith sate alone on the knoll that faced forest-land and road, and watched afar.

And the birds sung cheerily; but that was not the sound for which Edith listened: and the squirrel darted from tree to tree on the sward beyond; but not to see the games of the squirrel sate Edith by the grave of the Teuton. By-and-by, came the cry of the dogs, and the tall gre-hound * of Wales emerged from the bosky dells. Then Edith's heart heaved, and her eyes brightened. And now, with his hawk on his wrist, and his spear † in his hand, came, through the yellowing boughs, Harold the Earl.

And well may ye ween, that his heart beat as loud and his eye shone as bright as Edith's, when he saw who had watched for his footsteps on the sepulchral knoll; Love, forgetful of the presence of Death;—so has it ever been, so ever shall it be! He hastened his stride, and bounded up the gentle hillock, and his dogs, with a joyous bark, came round the knees of Edith. Then Harold shook the bird from his writ, and it fell, with its light wing, on the altar-stone of Thor.

"Thou art late, but thou art welcome, Harold my kinsman," said Edith, simply, as she bent her face over the hounds, whose gaunt heads she caressed.

"Call me not kinsman," said Harold, shrinking, and with a dark cloud on his broad brow.

"And why, Harold?"

"Oh, Edith, why?" murmured Harold; and his thought added, "she knows not, poor child, that in that mockery of kinship the Church sets its ban on our bridals."

He turned, and chid his dogs fiercely as they gambolled in rough glee round their fair friend.

The hounds crouched at the feet of Edith; and Edith looked in mild wonder at the troubled face of the Earl.

"Thine eyes rebuke me, Edith, more than my words the hounds!" said Harold, gently. "But there is quick blood in my veins; and the mind must be calm when it would control the humor. Calm was my mind, sweet Edith, in the old time, when thou wert an infant on my knee, and wreathing, with these rude hands, flower-chains for thy neck like the swan's down, I said—'The flowers fade, but the chain lasts when love weaves it.'"

Edith again bent her face over the crouching hounds. Harold gazed on her with mournful fondness; and the bird still sung, and the squirrel swung himself again from bough to bough. Edith spoke first—

"My godmother, thy sister, hath sent for me, Harold, and I am to go to the court tomorrow. Shalt thou be there?"

"Surely," said Harold, in an anxious voice, "surely, I will be there! So my sister hath sent for thee: wittest thou wherefore?"

Edith grew very pale, and her tone trembled as she answered—

"Well-a-day, yes."

"It is as I feared, then!" exclaimed Harold, in great agitation; "and my sister, whom these monks have demented, leagues herself with the King against the law of the wide welkin and the grand religion of the human heart. Oh!" continued the Earl, kindling into an enthusiasm, rare to his even moods, but wrung as much from his broad sense as from his strong affection, "when I compare the Saxon of our land and day, all enervated and decrepit by priestly superstition, with his forefathers in the first Christian era, yielding to the religion they adopted in its simple truths, but not to that rot of social happiness and free manhood which this cold and lifeless monachism—making virtue the absence of human ties—spreads around—which the great Bede,* though himself a monk, vainly but bitterly denounced;—yea, verily, when I see the Saxon already the theowe of the priest, I shudder to ask how long he will be folk-free of the tyrant."

He paused, breathed hard, and seizing, almost sternly, the girl's trembling arm, he

* The gre-hound was so called from hunting the *gre* or badger.

† The spear and the hawk were as the badges of Saxon nobility; and a thegn was seldom seen abroad without the one on his left wrist, the other in his right hand.

* Bed. *Epist. ad Egbert.*

resumed between his set teeth,—"So they would have thee be a nun?—Thou wilt not,—thou durst not,—thy heart would perjure thy vows!"

"Ah, Harold!" answered Edith, moved out of all bashfulness by his emotion and her own terror of the convent, and answering, if with the love of a woman, still with all the unconsciousness of a child: "Better, oh better the grate of the body than that of the heart!—In the grave I could still live for those I love; behind the Grate, love itself must be dead. Yes, thou pitiest me, Harold; thy sister, the Queen, is gentle and kind; I will fling myself at her feet, and say—'Youth is fond, and the world is fair: let me live my youth, and bless God in the world that he saw was good!'"

"My own, own dear Edith!" exclaimed Harold, overjoyed. "Say this. Be firm; they cannot, and they dare not force thee! The law cannot wrench thee against thy will from the ward of thy guardian Hilda; and, where the law is, there Harold at least is strong,—and there at least our kinship, if my bane, is thy blessing."

"Why, Harold, sayest thou that our kinship is thy bane? It is so sweet to me to whisper to myself, 'Harold is of thy kith, though distant; and it is natural to thee to have pride in his fame, and joy in his presence!' Why is that sweetness to me, to thee so bitter?"

"Because," answered Harold, dropping the hand he had clasped, and folding his arms in deep dejection, "because but for that I should say—'Edith, I love thee more than a brother: Edith, be Harold's wife!' And were I to say it, and we were to wed, all the priests of the Saxons would lift up their hands in horror, and curse our nuptials, and I should be the bann'd of that spectre the Church; and my house would shake to its foundation; and my father, and my brothers, and the thegns and the proceres, and the abbots and prelates, whose aid makes our force, would gather round me with threats and with prayers, that I might put thee aside. And mighty as I am now, so mighty once was Sweyn my brother; and outlaw as Sweyn is now, might Harold be, and outlaw if Harold were, what breast so broad as his could fill up the gap left in the defence of England? And the passions that I curb, as a rider his steed, might break their rein; and, strong in justice, and child of Nature, I might come, with banner and mail, against Church, and House, and Fatherland; and the blood of my countrymen might be poured like water: and, therefore, slave to the lying thraldom he despises, Harold dares not say to the maid of his love—'Give me thy right hand, and be my bride!'"

Edith had listened in bewilderment and despair, her eyes fixed on his, and her face locked and rigid, as if turned to stone. But when he had ceased, and, moving some steps away, turned aside his manly countenance, that Edith might not perceive its anguish, the noble and sublime spirit of that sex which ever, when lowliest, most comprehends the lofty, rose superior both to love and to grief; and rising, she advanced, and placing her slight hand on his stalwart shoulder, she said, half in pity half in reverence—

"Never before, O Harold, did I feel so proud of thee: for Edith could not love thee as she doth, and will till the grave clasp her, if thou didst not love England more than Edith. Harold, till this hour I was a child, and I knew not my own heart: I look now into that heart, and I see that I am woman. Harold, of the cloister I have now no fear: and all life does not shrink—no, it enlarges, and it soars into one desire—to be worthy to pray for thee!"

"Maid, maid!" exclaimed Harold, abruptly, and pale as the dead, "do not say thou hast no fear of the cloister. I adjure, I command thee, build not up between us that dismal everlasting wall. While thou art free Hope yet survives—a phantom, haply, but Hope still."

"As thou wilt, I will," said Edith, humbly: "order my fate so as pleases thee the best."

Then, not daring to trust herself longer, for she felt the tears rushing to her eyes, she turned away hastily, and left him alone beside the altar-stone and the tomb.

CHAPTER V.

THE next day, as Harold was entering the palace of Westminster, with intent to seek the King's lady, his father met him in one of the corridors, and taking him gravely by the hand, said—

"My son, I have much on my mind regarding thee and our House; come with me."

"Nay," said the Earl, "by your leave let it be later. For I have it on hand to see my sister, ere confessor, or monk, or schoolman, claim her hours!"

"Not so, Harold," said the Earl, briefly. "My daughter is now in her oratory, and we shall have time enow to treat of things mundane ere she is free to receive thee, and to preach to thee of things ghostly, the last miracle at St. Alban's, or the last dream of the King, who would be a great man and a stirring, if as restless when awake as he is in his sleep. Come."

Harold, in that filial obedience which belonged, as of course, to his antique cast of character, made no farther effort to escape, but with a sigh followed Godwin into one of the contiguous chambers.

"Harold," then said Earl Godwin, after closing the door carefully, "thou must not let the King keep thee longer in dalliance and idleness: thine earldom needs thee without delay. Thou knowest that these East Angles, as we Saxons still call them, are in truth mostly Danes and Norsemen; a people jealous and fierce, and free, and more akin to the Normans than to the Saxons. My whole power in England hath been founded, not less on my common birth with the free-folk of Wessex—Saxons like myself, and therefore easy for me, a Saxon, to conciliate and control—than on the hold I have ever sought to establish, whether by arms or by arts, over the Danes in the realm. And I tell and I warn thee, Harold, as the natural heir of my greatness, that he who cannot command the stout hearts of the Anglo-Danes, will never maintain the race of Godwin in the post they have won in the vanguard of Saxon England."

"This I wot well, my father," answered Harold; "and I see with joy, that while those descendants of heroes and freemen are blended indissolubly with the meeker Saxon, their freer laws and hardier manners are gradually supplanting, or rather regenerating, our own."

Godwin smiled approvingly on his son, and then his brow becoming serious, and the dark pupil of his blue eye dilating, he resumed:

"This is well, my son; and hast thou thought also, that while thou art loitering in these galleries, amidst the ghosts of men in monk cowls, Siward is shadowing our House with his glory, and all north the Humber rings with his name? Hast thou thought that all Mercia is in the hands of Leofric our rival, and that Algar his son, who ruled Wessex in my absence, left there a name so beloved, that had I stayed a year longer, the cry had been 'Algar' not 'Godwin?'—for so is the multitude ever! Now aid me, Harold, for my soul is troubled, and I cannot work alone; and though I say nought to others, my heart received a death-blow when tears fell from its blood-springs on the brow of Sweyn, my first-born." The old man paused, and his lip quivered.

"Thou, thou alone, Harold, noble boy, thou alone didst stand by his side in the hall; alone, alone, and I blessed thee in that hour over all the rest of my sons. Well, well! now to earth again. Aid me, Harold. I open to thee my web: complete the woof when this hand is cold. The new tree that stands alone in the plain is soon nipped by the winter; fenced round with the forest, its youth takes shelter from its fellows.* So is it with a house newly founded; it must win strength from the allies that it sets round its slender stem. What had been Godwin, son of Wolnoth, had he not married into the kingly house of great Canute? It is this that gives my sons now the right to the loyal love of the Danes. The throne passed from Canute and his race, and the Saxons again had their hour; and I gave, as Jephtha gave his daughter, my blooming Edith, to the cold bed of the Saxon King. Had sons sprung from that union, the grandson of Godwin, royal alike from Saxon and Dane, would reign on the throne of the isle. Fate ordered otherwise, and the spider must weave web anew. Thy brother, Tostig, has added more

* TEGNER'S *Frithiof*.

splendor than solid strength to our line, in his marriage with the daughter of Baldwin the Count. The foreigner helps us little in England. Thou, O Harold, must bring new props to the house, I would rather see thee wed to the child of one of our great rivals than to the daughter of kaisar, or outland king. Siward hath no daughter undisposed of. Algar, son of Leofric, hath a daughter fair as the fairest; make her thy bride, that Algar my cease to be a foe. This alliance will render Mercia, in truth, subject to our principalities, since the stronger must quell the weaker. It doth more. Algar himself has married into the royalty of Wales.* Thou wilt win all those fierce tribes to thy side. Their forces will gain thee the marches, now held so feebly under Rolf the Norman, and in case of brief reverse, or sharp danger, their mountains will give refuge from all foes. This day, greeting Algar, he told me he meditated bestowing his daughter on Gryffyth, the rebel under-King of North Wales. Therefore," continued the old Earl, with a smile, "thou must speak in time, and win and woo in the same breath. No hard task, methinks, for Harold of the golden tongue."

"Sir, and father," replied the young Earl, whom the long speech addressed to him had prepared for its close, and whose habitual self-control saved him from disclosing his emotion, "I thank you duteously, for your care for my future, and hope to profit by your wisdom. I will ask the King's leave to go to my East Anglians, and hold there a folkmuth, administer justice, redress grievances; and make thegn and ceorl content with Harold, their Earl. But vain is peace in the realm, if there is strife in the house. And Aldyth, the daughter of Algar, cannot be house-wife to me."

"Why?" asked the old Earl calmly, and surveying his son's face, with those eyes so clear yet so unfathomable.

"Because, though I grant her fair, she pleases not my fancy, nor would give warmth to my hearth. Because, as thou knowest well, Algar and I have ever been opposed, both in camp and in council; and I am not the man who can sell my love, though I may stifle my anger. Earl Harold needs no bride to bring spearmen to his back at his need; and his lordships he will guard with the shield of a man, not the spindle of a woman."

"Said in spite and in error," replied the old Earl, coolly. "Small pain had it given thee to forgive Algar old quarrels, and clasp his hand as a father-in-law—if thou hadst had for his daughter what the great are forbidden to regard save as a folly."

"Is love a folly, my father?"

"Surely, yes," said the Earl, with some sadness—"surely, yes, for those who know that life is made up of business and care, spun out in long years, not counted by the joys of an hour. Surely, yes; thinkest thou that I loved my first wife, the proud sister of Canute, or that Edith, thy sister, loved Edward, when he placed the crown on her head?"

"My father, in Edith, my sister, our House hath sacrificed enow to selfish power."

"I grant it, to selfish power," answered the eloquent old man, "but not enow for England's safety. Look to it, Harold; thy years, and thy fame, and thy state, place thee free from my control as a father, but not till thou sleepest in thy cerements art thou free from that father—thy land! Ponder it in thine own wise mind—wiser already than that which speaks to it under the hood of gray hairs. Ponder it, and ask thyself if thy power, when I am dead, is not necessary to the weal of England? and if aught that thy schemes can suggest would so strengthen that power, as to find in the heart of the kingdom a host of friends like the Mercians;—or if there could be a trouble and a bar to thy greatness, a wall in thy path, or a thorn in thy side, like the hate or the jealousy of Algar, the son of Leofric?"

Thus addressed, Harold's face, before serene and calm, grew overcast; and he felt the force of his father's words when appealing to his reason—not to his affections. The old man saw the advantage he had gained, and prudently forebore to press it. Rising, he drew round him his sweeping gonna lined with furs, and only when he reached the door, he added:—

* Some of the chroniclers say that he married the daughter of Gryffyth, the king of North Wales, but Gryffyth certainly married Algar's daughter, and that double alliance could not have been permitted. It was probably, therefore, some more distant kinswoman of Gryffyth's that was united to Algar.

"The old see afar; they stand on the height of experience, as a warder on the crown of a tower; and I tell thee, Harold, that if thou let slip this golden occasion, years hence—long and many—thou wilt rue the loss of the hour. And that, unless Mercia, as the centre of the kingdom, be reconciled to thy power, thou wilt stand high indeed—but on the shelf of a precipice. And if, as I suspect, thou lovest some other, who now clouds thy perception, and will then check thy ambition, thou wilt break her heart with thy desertion, or gnaw thine own with regret. For love dies in possession—ambition has no fruition, and so lives for ever."

"That ambition is not mine, my father," exclaimed Harold, earnestly; "I have not thy love of power, glorious in thee, even in its extremes. I have not thy——"

"Seventy years!" interrupted the old man, concluding the sentence. "At seventy all men who have been great will speak as I do; yet all will have known love. Thou not ambitious, Harold? Thou knowest not thyself, nor knowest thou yet what ambition is. That which I see far before me as thy natural prize, I dare not, or I will not say. When time sets that prize within reach of thy spear's point, say then, 'I am not ambitious!' Ponder and decide."

And Harold pondered long, and decided not as Godwin could have wished. For he had not the seventy years of his father, and the prize lay yet in the womb of the mountains; though the dwarf and the gnome were already fashioning the ore to the shape of a crown.

CHAPTER VI.

While Harold mused over his father's words, Edith, seated on a low stool beside the Lady of England, listened with earnest but mournful reverence to her royal namesake.

The Queen's* closet opened like the King's on one hand to an oratory, on the other to a spacious anteroom; the lower part of the walls was covered with arras, leaving space for a niche that contained an image of the Virgin. Near the doorway to the oratory, was the stoupe or aspersorium for holy-water; and in various cysts and crypts, in either room, were caskets containing the relics of saints. The purple light from the stained glass of a high narrow window, shaped in the Saxon arch, streamed rich and full over the Queen's bended head like a glory, and tinged her pale cheek, as with a maiden blush; and she might have furnished a sweet model for early artist, in his dreams of St. Mary the Mother, not when, young and blest, she held the divine infant in her arms, but when sorrow had reached even the immaculate bosom, and the stone had been rolled over the Holy Sepulchre. For beautiful the face still was, and mild beyond all words; but, beyond all words also, sad in its tender resignation.

And thus said the Queen to her godchild.

"Why dost thou hesitate and turn away? Thinkest thou, poor child, in thine ignorance of life, that the world ever can give thee a bliss greater than the calm of the cloister? Pause, and ask thyself, young as thou art, if all the true happiness thou hast known, is not bounded to hope. As long as thou hopest, thou art happy."

Edith sighed deeply, and moved her young head in involuntary acquiescence.

"And what is life to the nun, but hope. In that hope, she knows not the present, she lives in the future; she hears ever singing the chorus of the angels, as St. Dunstan heard them sing at the birth of Edgar.* That hope unfolds to her the heiligthum of the future. On earth her body, in heaven her soul!"

"And her heart, O Lady of England?" cried Edith, with a sharp pang.

The Queen paused a moment, and laid her pale hand kindly on Edith's bosom.

"Not beating, child, as thine does now, with vain thoughts, and worldly desires; but calm, calm as mine. It is in our power," resumed the Queen, after a second pause, "it is in our power to make the life within

* The title of queen is employed in these pages, as one which our historians have unhesitatingly given to the consorts of our Saxon kings; but the usual and correct designation of Edward's royal wife, in her own time, would be, Edith the Lady.

* Ethel, *De. Gen. Reg. Ang.*

us all soul; so that the heart is not, or is felt not; so that grief and joy have no power over us: so that we look tranquil on the stormy earth, as yon image of the Virgin, whom we make our example, looks from the silent niche. Listen, my godchild and darling.

"I have known human state, and human debasement. In these halls I woke Lady of England, and, ere sunset, my lord banished me, without one mark of honor, without one word of comfort, to the convent of Wherwell;—my father, my mother, my kin, all in exile; and my tears falling fast for them, but not on a husband's bosom."

"Ah then, noble Edith," said the girl, coloring with anger at the remembered wrong for her Queen, "ah then, surely at least, thy heart made itself heard."

"Heard, yea verily," said the Queen, looking up, and pressing her hands; "heard, but the soul rebuked it. And the soul said, 'Blessed are they that mourn;' and I rejoiced at the new trial which brought me nearer to Him who chastens those He loves."

"But thy banished kin—the valiant, the wise; they who placed thy lord on the throne?"

"Was it no comfort," answered the Queen simply, "to think that in the House of God my prayers for them would be more accepted than in the hall of kings? Yes, my child, I have known the world's honor, and the world's disgrace, and I have schooled my heart to be calm in both."

"Ah, thou art above human strength, Queen and Saint," exclaimed Edith; "and I have heard it said of thee, that as thou art now, thou wert from thine earliest years;* ever the sweet, the calm, the holy—ever less on earth than in heaven."

Something there was in the Queen's eyes, as she raised them towards Edith at this burst of enthusiasm, that gave for a moment, to a face otherwise so dissimular, the likeness to her father; something, in that large pupil, of the impenetrable unrevealing depth of a nature close and secret in self-control. And a more acute observer than Edith might long have been perplexed and haunted with that look, wondering, if indeed, under the divine and spiritual composure, lurked the mystery of human passion.

"My child," said the Queen, with the faintest smile upon her lips, and drawing Edith towards her, "there are moments, when all that breathe the breath of life feel, or have felt, alike. In my vain youth, I read, I mused, I pondered, but over worldly lore. And what men called the sanctity of virtue, was perhaps but the silence of thought. Now I have put aside those early and childish dreams and shadows, remembering them not, save (here the smile grew more pronounced) to puzzle some poor schoolboy with the knots and riddles of the sharp grammarian.* But not to speak of myself have I sent for thee. Edith, again and again, solemnly and sincerely, I pray thee to obey the wish of my lord the King. And now, while yet in all the bloom of thought, as of youth, while thou hast no memory save the child's, enter on the Realm of Peace."

"I cannot, I dare not, I cannot—ah, ask me not," said poor Edith, covering her face with her hands.

Those hands the Queen gently withdrew; and looking steadfastly in the changeful and half-averted face, she said mournfully, "Is it so, my godchild? and is thy heart set on the hopes of earth—thy dreams on the love of man?"

"Nay," answered Edith, equivocating; "but I have promised not to take the veil."

"Promised to Hilda?"

"Hilda," exclaimed Edith readily, "would never consent to it. Thou knowest her strong nature, her distaste to—to——"

"The laws of our holy Church—I do; and for that reason it is, mainly, that I join with the King in seeking to abstract thee from her influence. But it is not Hilda that thou hast promised?"

Edith hung her head.

"Is it to woman, or to man?"

Before Edith could answer, the door from the anteroom opened, gently, but without the usual ceremony, and Harold entered. His quick quiet eye embraced both forms, and curbed Edith's young impulse, which made her start from her seat, and advance joyously towards him as a protector.

"Fair day to thee, my sister," said the

* AILRED, *De Vit. Edward Confess.*

* Ingulfus.

Earl, advancing; "and pardon, if I break thus rudely on thy leisure; but few are the moments when beggar and Benedictine leave thee free to receive thy brother."

"Dost thou reproach me, Harold?"

"No, Heaven forfend!" replied the Earl, cordially, and with a look at once of pity and admiration; "for thou art one of the few, in this court of simulators, sincere and true; and it pleases thee to serve the Divine Power in thy way, as it pleases me to serve Him in mine."

"Thine, Harold?" said the Queen, shaking her head, but with a look of some human pride and fondness in her fair face.

"Mine; as I learned it from thee when I was thy pupil, Edith; when to those studies in which thou didst precede me, thou first didst lure me from sport and pastime; and from thee I learned to glow over the deeds of Greek and Roman, and say, 'they lived and died as men; like them may I live and die!'"

"Oh, true—too true!" said the Queen, with a sigh; "and I am to blame grievously that I did so pervert to earth a mind that might otherwise have learned holier examples;—nay, smile not with that haughty lip, my brother; for believe me—yea, believe me—there is more true valor in the life of one patient martyr than in the victories of Cæsar, or even the defeat of Brutus."

"It may be so," replied the Earl, "but out of the same oak we carve the spear and the cross; and those not worthy to hold the one, may yet not guiltily wield the other. Each to his path of life—and mine is chosen." Then, changing his voice, with some abruptness, he said. "But what hast thou been saying to thy fair godchild, that her cheek is pale, and her eyelids seem so heavy? Edith, Edith, my sister, beware how thou shapest the lot of the martyr withot the peace of the saint. Had Algive the nun been wedded to Sweyn our brother, Sweyn were not wending, bare-footed and forlorn, to lay the wrecks of desolated life at the Holy Tomb."

"Harold, Harold!" faltered the Queen, much struck with his words.

"But," the Earl continued—and something of the pathos which belongs to deep emotion vibrated in the eloquent voice, accustomed to command and persuade—"we strip not the green leaves for our yule hearths—we gather them up when dry and sere. Leave youth on the bough—let the bird sing to it—let it play free in the airs of heaven. Smoke comes from the branch which, cut in the sap, is cast upon the fire, and regret from the heart which is severed from the world while the world is in its May."

The Queen paced slowly, but in evident agitation, to and fro the room, and her hands clasped convulsively the rosary round her neck; then, after a pause of thought, she motioned to Edith, and, pointing to the oratory, said with forced composure, "Enter there, and there kneel; commune with thyself, and be still. Ask for a sign from above—pray for the grace within. Go; I would speak alone with Harold."

Edith crossed her arms on her bosom meekly, and passed into the oratory. The Queen watched her for a few moments, tenderly, as the slight, child-like form bent before the sacred symbol. Then she closed the door gently, and coming with a quick step to Harold, said, in a low but clear voice, "Dost thou love the maiden?"

"Sister," answered the Earl, sadly, "I love her as a man should love woman—more than my life, but less than the ends life lives for."

"Oh, world, world, world!" cried the Queen, passionately, "not even to thine own objects art thou true. O world! O world! thou desirest happiness below, and at every turn, with every vanity, thou tramplest happiness under foot! Yes, yes; they said to me, 'For the sake of our greatness, thou shalt wed King Edward.' And I live in the eyes that loathe me—and—and—" The Queen, as if conscience-stricken, paused aghast, kissed devoutly the relic suspended to her rosary, and continued with such calmness that it seemed as if two women were blent in one, so startling was the contrast. "And I have had my reward, but not from the world! Even so, Harold the Earl, and Earl's son, thou lovest yon fair child, and she thee; and ye might be happy, if happiness were earth's end; but, though high-born, and of fair temporal possessions, she brings thee not lands broad enough for her dowry, no troops of kindred to swell thy

lithsmen, and she is not a mark-stone in thy march to ambition: and so thou lovest her as man loves woman—'less than the ends life lives for!'"

"Sister," said Harold, "thou speakest as I love to hear thee speak—as my bright-eyed, rose-lipped sister spoke in the days of old; thou speakest as a woman with warm heart, and not as the mummy in the stiff cerements of priestly form; and if thou art with me, and thou wilt give me countenance, I will marry thy godchild, and save her alike from the dire superstitions of Hilda, and the grave of the abhorrent convent."

"But my father—my father!" cried the Queen; "who ever bended that soul of steel?"

"It is not my father I fear; it is thee and thy monks. Forgettest thou that Edith and I are within the six banned degrees of the Church?"

"True, most true," said the Queen, with a look of great terror; "I had forgotten. Avaunt, the very thought! Pray—fast—banish it—my poor, poor brother!" and she kissed his brow.

"So, there fades the woman, and the mummy speaks again!" said Harold, bitterly. "Be it so; I bow to my doom. Well, there may be a time when Nature on the throne of England shall prevail over Priestcraft; and, in guerdon for all my services, I will then ask a king who hath blood in his veins to win me the Pope's pardon and benison. Leave me that hope, my sister, and leave thy godchild on the shores of the living world."

The Queen made no answer; and Harold, auguring ill from her silence, moved on and opened the door of the oratory. But the image that there met him, that figure still kneeling, those eyes, so earnest in the tears that streamed from them fast and unheeded, fixed on the holy rood—awed his step and checked his voice. Nor till the girl had risen, did he break silence; then he said, gently, "My sister will press thee no more, Edith—"

"I say not that!" exclaimed the Queen. "Or if she doth, remember thy plighted promise under the wide cope of blue heaven, the old nor least holy temple of our common Father?"

With these words he left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

HAROLD passed into the Queen's antechamber. Here the attendance was small and select compared with the crowds which we shall see presently in the anteroom to the King's closet: for here came chiefly the more learned ecclesiastics, attracted instinctively by the Queen's own mental culture, and few indeed were they at that day (perhaps the most illiterate known in England since the death of Alfred*); and here came not the tribe of impostors, and the relic-venders, whom the infantine simplicity and lavish waste of the Confessor attracted. Some four or five priests and monks, some lonely widow, some orphan child, humble worth, or unprotected sorrow, made the noiseless levee of the sweet, sad Queen.

The groups turned, with patient eyes, towards the Earl, as he emerged from that chamber, which it was rare indeed to quit unconsoled, and marvelled at the flush in his cheek and the disquiet on his brow; but Harold was dear to the clients of his sister; for, despite his supposed indifference to the mere priestly virtues (if virtues we call them) of the decrepit time, his intellect was respected by yon learned ecclesiastics; and his character, as the foe of all injustice, and the fosterer of all that were desolate, was known to yon pale-eyed widow, and yon trembling orphan.

In the atmosphere of that quiet assembly, the Earl seemed to recover his kindly temperament, and he paused to address a friendly or a soothing word to each; so that when he vanished, the hearts there felt more light; and the silence, hushed before his entrance, was broken by many whispers in praise of the good Earl.

Descending a staircase without the walls—as even in royal halls the principal staircases were then—Harold gained a wide court, in which loitered several house carles,† and at-

* The clergy (says Malmesbury), contented with a very slight share of learning, could scarcely stammer out the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment. Other authorities, likely to be impartial, speak quite as strongly as to the prevalent ignorance of the time.

† House carles in the royal court were the body-guard, mostly, if not all, of Danish origin. They

tendants, whether of the King or the visitors; and, reaching the entrance of the palace, took his way towards the King's rooms, which lay near, and round, what is now called "the Painted Chamber," then used as a bedroom by Edward on state occasions.

And now he entered the ante-chamber of his royal brother-in-law. Crowded it was, but rather seemed it the hall of a convent than the ante-room of a king. Monks, pilgrims, priests, met his eye in every nook; and not there did the Earl pause to practise the arts of popular favor. Passing erect through the midst, he beckoned forth the officer, in attendance at the extreme end, who, after an interchange of whispers, ushered him into the royal presence. The monks and the priests, gazing towards the door which had closed on his stately form, said to each other:—

"The King's Norman favorites at least honored the Church."

"That is true," said an abbot; "and an it were not for two things, I should love the Norman better than the Saxon."

"What are they, my father?" asked an aspiring young monk.

"*Inprinis*," quoth the abbot, proud of the one Latin word he thought he knew, but that, as we see, was an error; "they cannot speak so as to be understood, and I fear me much they incline to mere carnal learning."

Here there was a sanctified groan:—

"Count William himself spoke to me in Latin!" continued the abbot, raising his eyebrows.

"Did he?—Wonderful!" exclaimed several voices. "And what did you answer, holy father?"

"Marry," said the abbot, solemnly, "I replied, '*Inprinis*.'"

"Good!" said the young monk, with a look of profound admiration.

"Whereat the good Count looked puzzled—as I meant him to be:—a heinous fault, and one intolerant to the clergy, that love of profane tongues! And the next thing against your Norman is (added the abbot, with a sly wink), that he is a close man, who loves not his stoup; now, I say, that a priest never has more hold over a sinner than when he makes the sinner open his heart to him."

"That's clear!" said a fat priest, with a lubricate and shining nose.

"And how," pursued the abbot triumphantly, "can a sinner open his heavy heart until you have given him something to lighten it? Oh, many and many a wretched man have I comforted spiritually over a flagon of stout ale! and many a good legacy to the Church hath come out of a friendly wassail between watchful shepherd and strayed sheep! But what hast thou there?" resumed the abbot, turning to a man, clad in the lay garb of a burgess of London, who had just entered the room, followed by a youth bearing what seemed a coffer, covered with a fine linen cloth.

"Holy father!" said the burgess, wiping his forehead, "it is a treasure so great, that I trow Hugoline, the King's treasurer, will scowl at me for a year to come, for he likes to keep his own grip on the King's gold!"

At this indiscreet observation, the abbot, the monks, and all the priestly bystanders looked grim and gloomy, for each had his own special design upon the peace of poor Hugoline, the treasurer, and liked not to see him the prey of a layman.

"*Inprinis!*" quoth the abbot, puffing out the word with great scorn; "thinkest thou, son of Mammon, that our good King sets his pious heart on gew-gaws, and gems, and such vanities? Thou shouldst take the goods to Count Baldwin of Flanders; or Tostig, the proud earl's proud son."

"Marry!" said the cheapman, with a smile; "my treasure will find small price with Baldwin the scoffer, and Tostig the vain! Nor need ye look at me so sternly, my fathers; but rather vie with each other who shall win this wonder of wonders for his own convent; know, in a word, that it is the right thumb of St. Jude, which a worthy man bought at Rome for me, for 3000 lb. weight of silver; and I ask but 500 lb. over the purchase for my pains and my fee." *

"Humph!" said the abbot.

appear to have been first formed, or at least employed, in that capacity by Canute. With the great earls, the house carles probably exercised the same functions, but in the ordinary acceptation of the word in families of lower rank, house carle was a domestic servant.

* This was cheap. For Agelnoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, gave the Pope 6000 lb. weight of silver for the arm of St. Augustine.—MALMESBURY.

"Humph!" said the aspiring young monk; the rest gathered wistfully round the linen cloth.

A fiery exclamation of wrath and disdain was here heard; and all turning, saw a tall, fierce-looking thegn, who had found his way into that group, like a hawk in a rookery.

"Dost thou tell me, knave," quoth the thegn, in a dialect that bespoke him a Dane by origin, with the broad burr still retained in the north; "Dost thou tell me that the King will waste his gold on such fooleries, while the fort built by Canute at the flood of the Humber is all fallen into ruin, without a man in steel jacket to keep watch on the war fleets of Swede and Norwegian?"

"Worshipful minister," replied the cheapman, with some slight irony in his tone; "these reverend fathers will tell thee that the thumb of St. Jude is far better aid against Swede and Norwegian than forts of stone and jackets of steel; nathless, if thou wantest jackets of steel, I have some to sell at a fair price, of the last fashion, and helms with long nose-pieces, as are worn by the Normans."

"The thumb of a withered old saint," cried the Dane, not heeding the last words, "more defence at the mouth of the Humber than crenellated castles, and mailed men!"

"Surely, naught son," said the abbot, looking shocked, and taking part with the cheapmen. "Dost thou not remember that, in the pious and famous council of 1014, it was decreed to put aside all weapons of flesh against thy heathen countrymen, and depend alone on St. Michael to fight for us? Thinkest thou that the saint would ever suffer his holy thumb to fall into the hands of the Gentiles?—never! Go to, thou art not fit to have conduct of the King's wars. Go to, and repent, my son, or the King shall hear of it."

"Ah, wolf in sheep's clothing!" muttered the Dane, turning on his heel; "if thy monastery were but built on the other side the Humber!"

The cheapmen heard him, and smiled. While such the scene in the anteroom, we follow Harold into the King's presence.

On entering, he found there a man in the prime of life, and, though richly clad, in embroidered gonna, and with gilt ateghar at his side, still with the loose robe, the long moustache, and the skin of the throat and right hand punctured with characters and devices, which proved his adherence to the fashions of the Saxon.* And Harold's eye sparkled, for in this guest he recognized the father of Aldyth, Earl Algar, son of Leofric. The two nobles exchanged grave salutations, and each eyed the other wistfully.

The contrast between the two was striking. The Danish race were men generally of larger frame, and grander mould than the Saxon;† and though in all else, as to exterior, Harold was eminently Saxon, yet, in common with his brothers, he took from the mother's side the lofty air and iron frame of the old kings of the sea. But Algar, below the middle height, though well set, was slight in comparison with Harold. His strength was that which men often take rather from the nerve than the muscle; a strength that belongs to quick tempers and restless energies. His light blue eye singularly vivid and glittering; his quivering lip; the veins swelling, at each emotion, on the fair white temples; the long yellow hair, bright as gold, and resisting, in its easy curls, all attempts to curb it into the smooth flow most in fashion; the nervous movements of the gesture; the somewhat sharp and hasty tones of the voice; all opposed, as much as if the two men were of different races, the steady deep eye of Harold, his composed mien, sweet and majestic, his decorous locks parted on the king-like front, with their large single curl, where they touched the shoulder. Intelligence and will were apparent in both the men; but the intelligence of one was acute and rapid, that of the other profound and steadfast; the will of one broke in flashes of lightning, that of the other was calm as the summer sun at noon.

"Thou art welcome, Harold," said the

* William of Malmesbury says, that the English, at the time of the Conquest, loaded their arms with gold bracelets, and *adorned* their skins with punctured designs, i. e., a sort of tattooing. He says, that they then wore short garments, reaching to the mid-knee; but that was a Norman fashion, and the loose robes assigned in the text to Algar were the old Saxon fashion, which made but little distinction between the dress of women and that of men.

† And in England, to this day, the descendants of the Anglo-Danes, in Cumberland and Yorkshire, are still a taller and bonier race than those of the Anglo-Saxons, as in Surrey and Sussex.

King, with less than his usual listlessness, and with a look of relief, as the Earl approached him.

"Our good Algar comes to us with a suit well worthy consideration, though pressed somewhat hotly, and evincing too great a desire for goods worldly; contrasting in this his most laudable father, our well-beloved Leofric, who spends his substance in endowing monasteries, and dispensing alms; where-for he shall receive a hundred-fold in the treasure-house above."

"A good interest, doubtless, my lord the King," said Algar, quickly, "but one that is not paid to his heirs; and the more need, if my father (whom I blame not for doing as he lists with his own) gives all he hath to the monks—the more need, I say, to take care that his son shall be enabled to follow his example. As it is, most noble King, I fear me that Algar, son of Leofric, will have nothing to give. In brief, Earl Harold," continued Algar, turning to his fellow thegn —"in brief, thus stands the matter. When our lord the King was first graciously pleased to consent to rule in England, the two chiefs who most assured his throne were thy father and mine: often foes, they laid aside feud and jealousy for the sake of the Saxon line. Now, since then, thy father hath strung earldom to earldom, like links in a coat mail. And, save Northumbria and Mercia, well nigh all England falls to him and his sons; whereas my father remains what he was, and my father's son stands landless and penceless. In thine absence the King was graciously pleased to bestow on me thy father's earldom; men say that I ruled it well. Thy father returns, and though (here Algar's eyes shot fire, and his hand involuntarily rested on his ateghar), I could have held it, methinks, by the strong hand, I gave it up at my father's prayer, and the King's hest, with a free heart. Now, therefore, I come to my lord, and I ask, 'What lands and what lordships canst thou spare in broad England to Algar, once Earl of Wessex, and son to the Leofric whose hand smoothed the way to thy throne?' My lord the King is pleased to preach to me contempt of the world; thou dost not despise the world, Earl of the East Angles,—what sayest thou to the heir of Leofric?"

"That thy suit is just," answered Harold, calmly, "but urged with small reverence."

Earl Algar bounded like a stag that the arrow hath startled.

"It becomes thee, who hast backed thy suits with war ships and mail, to talk of reverence, and rebuke one whose fathers reigned over earldoms,* when thine were, no doubt, ceorls at the plough. But for Edric Streone, the traitor and low-born, what had been Wolnoth, thy grandsire?"

So rude and home an assault in the presence of the King, who, though personally he loved Harold in his lukewarm way, yet, like all weak men, was not displeased to see the strong split their strength against each other, brought the blood into Harold's cheek; but he answered calmly:—

"We live in a land, son of Leofric, in which birth, though not disesteemed, gives of itself no power in council or camp. We belong to a land where men are valued for what they are, not for what their dead ancestors might have been. So has it been for ages in Saxon England, where my fathers, through Godwin, as thou sayest, might have been ceorls; and so, I have heard, it is in the land of the martial Danes, where my fathers, through Githa, reigned on the thrones of the North."

"Thou dost well," said Algar, gnawing his lip, "to shelter thyself on the spindle side, but we Saxons of pure descent think little of your kings of the North, pirates and idolators, and eaters of horseflesh; but enjoy what thou hast, and let Algar have his due."

"It is for the King, not his servant, to answer the prayer of Algar," said Harold, withdrawing to the farther end of the room.

Algar's eye followed him, and observing

* Very few of the greater Saxon nobles could pretend to a lengthened succession in their demesnes. The wars with the Danes, the many revolutions which threw new families uppermost, the confiscations and banishments, and the invariable rule of rejecting the heir, if not of mature years at his father's death, caused rapid changes of dynasty in the several earldoms. But the family of Leofric had just claims to a very rare antiquity in their Mercian lordship. Leofric was the sixth Earl of Chester and Coventry, in lineal descent from his namesake, Leofric the First; he extended the supremacy of his hereditary lordship over all Mercia. See DUGDALE, *Monast.* vol. iii. p. 102; and PALGRAVE'S *Commonwealth, Proofs and Illustrations*, p. 291.

that the King was fast sinking into one of the fits of religious reverie in which he sought to be inspired with a decision, whenever his mind was perplexed, he moved with a light step to Harold, put his hand on his shoulder, and whispered,—

"We do ill to quarrel with each other—I repent me of hot words:—enough. Thy father is a wise man, and sees far—thy father would have us friends. Be it so. Hearken: my daughter Aldyth is esteemed not the least fair of the maidens in England; I will give her to thee as thy wife, and as thy morgen gift, thou shalt win for me from the King the earldom forfeited by thy brother Sweyn, now parcelled out amongst sub-earls and thegns—easy enow to control. By the shrine of St. Alban, dost thou hesitate, man?"

"No, not an instant," said Harold, stung to the quick. "Not, couldst thou offer me all Mercia as her dower, would I wed the daughter of Algar; and bend my knee, as a son to a wife's father, to the man who despises my lineage, while he truckles to my power."

Algar's face grew convulsed with rage; but without saying a word to the Earl he strode back to Edward, who now with vacant eyes looked up from the rosary over which he had been bending, and said abruptly—

"My lord the King, I have spoken as I think it becomes a man who knows his own claims, and believes in the gratitude of princes. Three days will I tarry in London for your gracious answer; on the fourth I depart. May the saints guard your throne, and bring around it its best defence, the thegn-born satraps whose fathers fought with Alfred and Athelstan. All went well with merrie England till the hoof of the Dane King broke the soil, and mushrooms sprung up where the oak-trees fell."

When the son of Leofric had left the chamber, the King rose wearily, and said in Norman French, to which language he always yearningly returned when with those who could speak it,—

"*Beau frère* and *bien aimé*, in what trifles must a king pass his life! And, all this while, matters grave and urgent demand me. Know that Eadmer, the cheapman, waits without, and hath brought me, dear and good man, the thumb of St, Jude! What thought of delight! And this unmannerly son of strife, with his jay's voice and wolf's eyes, screaming at me for earldoms!—oh the folly of man! Naught, naught, very naught!"

"Sir and King," said Harold, "it ill becomes me to arraign your pious desires, but these relics are of vast cost; our coasts are ill defended, and the Dane yet lays claim to your kingdom. Three thousand pounds of silver and more does it need to repair even the old wall of London and Southweorc."

"Three thousand pounds!" cried the King; "thou art mad, Harold! I have scarce twice that sum in the treasury; and besides the thumb of St. Jude, I daily expect the tooth of St. Remigius—the tooth of St. Remigius!"

Harold sighed. "Vex not yourself, my lord, I will see to the defences of London. For, thanks to your grace, my revenues are large, while my wants are simple. I seek you now to pray your leave to visit my earldom. My lithsmen murmur at my absence, and grievances, many and sore, have arisen in my exile."

The King stared in terror; and his look was that of a child when about to be left in the dark.

"Nay, nay; I cannot spare thee, *beau frère*. Thou curbest all these stiff thegns—thou leavest me time for the devout; moreover thy father, thy father, I will not be left to thy father! I love him not!"

"My father," said Harold mournfully, "returns to his own earldom; and of all our House you will have but the mild face of your queen by your side!"

The King's lip writhed at that hinted rebuke, or implied consolation. "Edith the Queen," he said, after a slight pause, "is pious and good; and she hath never gainsaid my will, and she hath set before her as a model the chaste Susannah, as I, unworthy man, from youth upward, have walked in the pure steps of Joseph.* But," added the King, with a touch of human feeling in his voice, "canst thou not conceive, Harold, thou who art a warrior, what it would be to see ever before thee the face of thy deadliest

* AILRED *de Vit. Edw.*

foe—the one against whom all thy struggles of life and death had turned into memories of hyssop and gall?"

"My sister!" exclaimed Harold, in indignant amaze, "My sister thy deadliest foe! She who never once murmured at neglect, disgrace—she whose youth hath been consumed in prayers for thee and thy realm—my sister! O King, I dream?"

"Thou dreamest not, carnal man," said the King, peevishly. "Dreams are the gifts of the saints, and are not granted to such as thou! Dost thou think that, in the prime of my manhood, I could have youth and beauty forced on my sight, and hear man's law and man's voice say, 'They are thine, and thine only,' and not feel that war was brought to my hearth, and a snare set on my bed, and that the fiend had set watch on my soul? Verily, I tell thee, man of battle, that thou hast known no strife as awful as mine, and achieved no victory as hard and as holy. And now, when my beard is silver, and the Adam of old is expelled at the precincts of death; now, thinkest thou, that I can be reminded of the strife and temptation of yore, without bitterness and shame; when days were spent in fasting, and nights in fierce prayer; and in the face of woman I saw the devices of Satan?"

Edward colored as he spoke, and his voice trembled with the accents of what seemed hate. Harold gazed on him mutely, and felt that at last he had won the secret that had ever perplexed him, and that in seeking to be above the humanity of love, the would-be saint had indeed turned love into the hues of hate—a thought of anguish, and a memory of pain.

The King recovered himself in a few moments, and said, with some dignity, "But God and his saints alone should know the secrets of the household. What I have said was rung from me. Bury it in thy heart. Leave me, then, Harold, sith so it must be. Put thine earldom in order, attend to the monasteries and the poor, and return soon. As for Algar, what sayest thou?"

"I fear me," answered the large-souled Harold, with a victorious effort of justice over resentment, "that if you reject his suit you will drive him into some perilous extremes. Despite his rash and proud spirit, he is brave against foes, and beloved by the ceorls, who oft like best the frank and hasty spirit. Wherefore some power and lordship it were wise to give, without dispossessing others, and not more wise than due, for his father served you well."

"And hath endowed more houses of God than any earl in the kingdom. But Algar is no Leofric. We will consider your words and heed them. Bless you, *beau frère!* and send in the cheapman. The thumb of St. Jude! What a gift to my new church of St. Peter! The thumb of St. Jude!—*Non nobis gloria! Sancta Maria!* The thumb of St. Jude!"

BOOK THE FIFTH.

DEATH AND LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

HAROLD, without waiting once more to see Edith, nor even taking leave of his father, repaired to Dunwich,* the capital of his earldom. In his absence, the King wholly forgot Algar and his suit; and in the meanwhile the only lordships at his disposal, Stigand, the grasping Bishop, got from him without an effort. In much wrath, Earl Algar, on the fourth day, assembling all the loose men-at-arms he could find around the metropolis, and at the head of a numerous disorderly band, took his way into Wales, with his young daughter Aldyth, to whom the crown of a Welch king was perhaps some comfort for the loss of the fair Earl; though the rumor ran that she had long since lost her heart to her father's foe.

Edith, after a long homily from the King, returned to Hilda; nor did her godmother renew the subject of the convent. All she said on parting was, "Even in youth the silver cord may be loosened, and the golden bowl may be broken; and rather perhaps in youth than in age, when the heart has grown hard, wilt thou recall with a sigh my counsels."

Godwin had departed to Wales; all his sons were at their several lordships; Edward was left alone to his monks and relic-venders. And so months passed.

Now it was the custom with the old kings of England to hold state and wear their crowns thrice a year, at Christmas, at Easter, and at Whitsuntide; and in those times their nobles came round them, and there was much feasting and great pomp.

So, in the Easter of the year of our Lord 1053, King Edward kept his court at Windshore,* and Earl Godwin and his sons, and many others of high degree, left their homes to do honor to the King. And Earl Godwin came first to his house in London—near the Tower Palatine, in what is now called the Fleet—and Harold the Earl, and Tostig, and Leofwine, and Gurth, were to meet him there, and go thence, with the full state of their sub-thegns, and cnehts, and house-carles, their falcons, and their hounds, as become men of such rank, to the court of King Edward.

Earl Godwin sate with his wife, Ghita, in a room out of the Hall, which looked on the Thames,—awaiting Harold, who was expected to arrive ere nightfall. Gurth had ridden forth to meet his brother, and Leofwine and Tostig had gone over to Southwark, to try their hand-dogs on the great bear, which had been brought from the North a few days before, and was said to have hugged many good hounds to death, and a large train of thegns and house-carles had gone with them to see the sport; so that the old Earl and his lady the Dane sate alone. And there was a cloud upon Earl Godwin's large forehead, and he sate by the fire, spreading his hands before it, and looking thoughtfully on the flame, as it broke through the smoke which burst out into the *cover* or hole in the roof.

And in that large house there were no less than three 'covers,' or rooms, wherein fires

* Dunwich, now swallowed up by the sea—Hostile element to the house of Godwin!

* Windsor.

could be lit in the centre of the floor; and the rafters above were blackened with the smoke; and in those good old days, ere chimneys, if existing, were much in use, "poses, and rheumatisms, and catarrhs," were unknown,—so wholesome and healthful was the smoke. Earl Godwin's favorite hound, old, like himself, lay at his feet, dreaming, for it whined and was restless. And the Earl's old hawk, with its feathers all stiff and sparce, perched on the dossel of the Earl's chair; and the floor was pranked with rushes and sweet herbs—the first of the spring; and Githa's feet were on her stool, and she leaned her proud face on the small hand which proved her descent from the Dane, and rocked herself to and fro, and thought of her son Wolnoth in the court of the Norman.

"Githa," at last said the Earl, "thou hast been to me a good wife and a true, and thou hast borne me tall and bold sons, some of whom have caused us sorrow, and some joy; and in sorrow and in joy we have but drawn closer to each other. Yet when we wed thou wert in thy first youth, and the best part of my years was fled; and thou wert a Dane and I a Saxon; and thou a king's niece, and now a king's sister, and I but tracing two descents to thegn's rank."

Moved and marvelling at this touch of sentiment in the calm Earl, in whom indeed such sentiment was rare, Githa roused herself from her musings, and said simply and anxiously—

"I fear my lord is not well, that he speaks thus to Githa!"

The Earl smiled faintly.

"Thou art right with thy woman's wit, wife. And for the last few weeks, though I said it not to alarm thee, I have had strange noises in my ears, and a surge, as of blood, to the temples."

"O Godwin! dear spouse," said Githa, tenderly, "and I was blind to the cause, but wondered why there was some change in thy manner! But I will go to Hilda to-morrow; she hath charms against all disease."

"Leave Hilda in peace, to give her charms to the young; age defies Wigh and Wicca. Now hearken to me. I feel that my thread is nigh spent, and, as Hilda would say, my Fylgia forewarns me that we are about to part. Silence, I say, and hear me. I have done proud things in my day; I have made kings and built thrones, and I stand higher in England than ever thegn or earl stood before. I would not, Githa, that the tree of my house, planted in the storm, and watered with lavish blood, should wither away."

The old Earl paused, and Githa said, loftily—

"Fear not that thy name will pass from the earth, or thy race from power. For fame has been wrought by thy hands, and sons have been born to thy embrace; and the boughs of the tree thou hast planted shall live in the sunlight when we its roots, O my husband, are buried in the earth."

"Githa," replied the Earl, "thou speakest as the daughter of kings and the mother of men; but listen to me, for my soul is heavy. Of these our sons, our first-born, alas! is a wanderer and outcast—Sweyn, once the beautiful and brave; and Wolnoth, thy darling, is a guest in the court of the Norman, our foe. Of the rest, Gurth is so mild and so calm, that I predict without fear that he will be a warrior of fame, for the mildest in hall are ever the boldest in field. But Gurth hath not the deep wit of these tangled times; and Leofwine is too light, and Tostig too fierce. So wife mine, of these our six sons, Harold alone, dauntless as Tostig, mild as Gurth, hath his father's thoughtful brain. And, if the king remains as aloof as now from his royal kinsman, Edward the Atheling, who"—the Earl hesitated and looked round—"who so near to the throne when I am no more, as Harold, the joy of the ceorls, and the pride of the thegns?—he whose tongue never falters in the Witan, and whose arm never yet hath known defeat in the field?"

Githa's heart swelled, and her cheek grew flushed.

"But what I fear the most," resumed the Earl, "is, not the enemy without, but the jealousy within. By the side of Harold stands Tostig, rapacious to grasp, but impotent to hold—able to ruin, strengthless to save."

"Nay, Godwin, my lord, thou wrongest our handsome son."

"Wife, wife," said the Earl, stamping his foot, "hear me and obey me; for my words

on earth may be few, and while thou gainsayest me the blood mounts to my brain, and my eyes see through a cloud."

"Forgive me, sweet lord," said Githa, humbly.

"Mickle and sore it repents me that in their youth I spared not the time from my worldly ambition to watch over the hearts of my sons; and thou wert too proud of the surface without, to look well to the workings within, and what was once soft to the touch is now hard to the hammer. In the battle of life the arrows we neglect to pick up, Fate, our foe, will store in her quiver; we have armed her ourselves with the shafts—the more need to be ware with the shield. Wherefore, if thou survivest me, and if, as I forebode, dissension break out between Harold and Tostig, I charge thee by memory of our love, and reverence for my grave, to deem wise and just all that Harold deems just and wise. For when Godwin is in the dust, his House lives alone in Harold. Heed me now, and heed ever. And so, while the day yet lasts, I will go forth into the marts and the guilds, and talk with the burgesses, and smile on their wives, and be, to the last, Godwin the smooth and the strong."

So saying, the old Earl arose, and walked forth with a firm step; and his old hound sprang up, pricked its ears, and followed him; the blinded falcon turned its head towards the clapping door, but did not stir from the dossel.

Then Githa again leant her cheek on her hand, and again rocked herself to and fro, gazing into the red flame of the fire,—red and fitful through the blue smoke—and thought over her lord's words. It might be the third part of an hour after Godwin had left the house, when the door opened, and Githa, expecting the return of her sons, looked up eagerly, but it was Hilda, who stooped her head under the vault of the door; and behind Hilda came two of her maidens, bearing a small cyst, or chest. The Vala motioned to her attendants to lay the cyst at the feet of Githa, and, that done, with lowly salutation they left the room.

The superstitions of the Danes were strong in Githa; and she felt an indescribable awe when Hilda stood before her, the red light playing on the Vala's stern marble face, and contrasting robes of funereal black. But, with all her awe, Githa, who, not educated like her daughter Edith, had few feminine resources, loved the visits of her mysterious kinswoman. She loved to live her youth over again in discourse on the wild customs and dark rites of the Dane; and even her awe itself had the charm which the ghost tale has to the child;—for the illiterate are ever children. So, recovering her surprise, and her first pause, she rose to welcome the Vala, and said:—

"Hail, Hilda, and thrice hail! The day has been warm and the way long; and, ere thou takest food and wine, let me prepare for thee the bath for thy form, or the bath for thy feet. For as sleep to the young, is the bath to the old."

Hilda shook her head.

"Bringer of sleep am I, and the baths I prepare are in the halls of Valhalla. Offer not to the Vala the bath for mortal weariness, and the wine and the food meet for human guests. Sit thee down, daughter of the Dane, and thank thy new gods for the past that hath been thine. Not ours is the present, and the future escapes from our dreams; but the past is ours ever, and all eternity cannot revoke a single joy that the moment hath known."

Then seating herself in Godwin's large chair, she leant over her seid-staff, and was silent, as if absorbed in her thoughts.

"Githa," she said at last, "where is thy lord? I came to touch his hand and to look on his brow."

"He hath gone forth into the mart, and my sons are from home; and Harold comes hither, ere night, from his earldom."

A faint smile, as of triumph, broke over the lips of the Vala, and then as suddenly yielded to an expression of great sadness.

"Githa," she said, slowly, "doubtless thou rememberest in thy young days to have seen or heard of the terrible heil-maid Belsta?"

"Ay, ay," answered Githa, shuddering; "I saw her once in gloomy weather, driving before her herds of dark gray cattle. Ay, ay; and my father beheld her ere his death, riding the air on a wolf, with a snake for a bridle. Why askest thou?"

"Is it not strange," said Hilda, evading

the question, "that Belsta, and Heidr, and Hulla of old, the wolf-riders, the men-devourers, could win to the uttermost secrets of galdra, though applied only to purposes the direst and fellest to man, and that I, though ever in the future,—I, though tasking the Nornas not to afflict a foe, but to shape the careers of those I love,—I find, indeed, my predictions fulfilled; but how often, alas! only in horror and doom!"

"How so, kinswoman, how so?" said Githa, awed, yet charmed in the awe, and drawing her chair nearer to the mournful sorceress. "Didst thou not foretell our return in triumph from the unjust outlawry, and, lo, it hath come to pass? and hast thou not" (here Githa's proud face flushed) "foretold also that my stately Harold shall wear the diadem of a king?"

"Truly, the first came to pass," said Hilda; "but—" she paused, and her eye fell on the cyst; then breaking off she continued, speaking to herself rather than to Githa—"And Harold's dream, what did that portend? the runes fail me, and the dead give no voice. And beyond one dim day, in which his betrothed shall clasp him with the arms of a bride, all is dark to my vision—dark—dark. Speak not to me, Githa; for a burthen, heavy as the stone on a grave, rests on a weary heart!"

A dead silence succeeded, till, pointing with her staff to the fire, the Vala said, "Lo, where the smoke and the flame contend!—the smoke rises in dark gyres to the air, and escapes, to join the wrack of clouds. From the first to the last we trace its birth and its fall; from the heart of the fire to the descent in the rain, so is it with human reason, which is not the light but the smoke; it struggles but to darken us; it soars but to melt in the vapor and dew. Yet lo, the flame burns in our hearth until the fuel fails, and goes at last, none know whither. But it lives in the air though we see it not; it lurks in the stone and waits the flash of the steel; it coils round the dry leaves and sere stalks, and a touch reillumines it; it plays in the marsh—it collects in the heavens—it appals us in the lightning—it gives warmth to the air—life of our life, and element of all elements. O Githa, the flame is the light of the soul, the element everlasting; and it liveth still, when it escapes from our view; it burneth in the shapes to which it passes; it vanishes, but is never extinct."

So saying, the Vala's lips again closed; and again both the women sate silent by the great fire, as it flared and flickered over the deep lines and high features of Githa, the Earl's wife, and the calm, unwrinkled, solemn face of the melancholy Vala.

CHAPTER II.

While these conferences took place in the house of Godwin, Harold, on his way to London, dismissed his train to precede him to his father's roof, and, striking across the country, rode fast and alone towards the old Roman abode of Hilda. Months had elapsed since he had seen or heard of Edith. News at that time, I need not say, was rare and scarce, and limited to public events, either transmitted by special nuncius, or passing pilgrim, or borne from lip to lip by the talk of the scattered multitude. But even in his busy and anxious duties, Harold had in vain sought to banish from his heart the image of that young girl, whose life he needed no Vala to predict to him was interwoven with the fibres of his own. The obstacles which, while he yielded to, he held unjust and tyrannical, obstacles allowed by his reluctant reason and his secret ambition—not sanctified by conscience—only inflamed the deep strength of the solitary passion his life had known; a passion that, dating from the very childhood of Edith, had, often unknown to himself, animated his desire of fame, and mingled with his visions of power. Nor, though hope was far and dim, was it extinct. The legitimate heir of Edward the Confessor was a prince living in the Court of the Emperor, of fair repute, and himself wedded; and Edward's health, always precarious, seemed to forbid any very prolonged existence to the reigning king. Therefore, he thought, that through the successor, whose throne would rest in safety upon Harold's support, he might easily obtain that dispensation from the Pope which

he knew the present king would never ask—a dispensation rarely indeed, if ever, accorded to any subject, and which, therefore, needed all a king's power to back it.

So in that hope, and fearful lest it should be quenched for ever by Edith's adoption of the veil and the irrevocable vow, with a beating, disturbed, but joyful heart, he rode over field and through forest to the old Roman house.

He emerged at length to the rear of the villa, and the sun, fast hastening to its decline, shone full upon the rude columns of the Druid temple. And there, as he had seen her before, when he had first spoken of love and its barriers, he beheld the young maiden.

He sprang from his horse, and leaving the well-trained animal loose to browse on the waste land, he ascended the knoll. He stole noiselessly behind Edith, and his foot stumbled against the grave-stone of the dead Titan-Saxon of old. But the apparition, whether real or fancied, and the dream that had followed, had long passed from his memory, and no superstition was in the heart springing to the lips, that cried "Edith," once again.

The girl started, looked round, and fell upon his breast.

It was some moments before she recovered consciousness, and then, withdrawing herself gently from his arms, she leant for support against the Teuton altar.

She was much changed since Harold had seen her last: her cheek had grown pale and thin, and her rounded form seemed wasted; and sharp grief, as he gazed, shot through the soul of Harold.

"Thou hast pined, thou hast suffered," said he mournfully: "and I, who would shed my life's blood to take one from thy sorrows, or add to one of thy joys, have been afar, unable to comfort, perhaps only a cause of thy woe."

"No, Harold," said Edith, faintly, "never of woe; always of comfort, even in absence. I have been ill, and Hilda hath tried rune and charm all in vain. But I am better, now that Spring hath come tardily forth, and I look on the fresh flowers, and hear the song of the birds."

But tears were in the sound of her voice, while she spoke.

"And they have not tormented thee again with the thoughts of the convent?"

"They? no;—but my soul, yes. O Harold, release me from my promise; for the time already hath come that thy sister foretold to me; the silver cord is loosened, and the golden bowl is broken, and I would fain take the wings of the dove, and be at peace."

"Is it so?—Is there peace in the home where the thought of Harold becomes a sin?"

"Not sin then and there, Harold, not sin. Thy sister hailed the convent when she thought of prayer for those she loved."

"Prate not to me of my sister!" said Harold, through his set teeth. "It is but a mockery to talk of prayer for the heart that thou thyself rendest in twain. Where is Hilda? I would see her."

"She hath gone to thy father's house with a gift; and it was to watch for her return that I sate on the green knoll."

The Earl then drew near and took her hand, and sate by her side, and they conversed long. But Harold saw with a fierce pang that Edith's heart was set upon the convent, and that even in his presence, and despite his soothing words, she was broken-spirited and despondent. It seemed as if her youth and life had gone from her, and the day had come in which she said, "There is no pleasure."

Never had he seen her thus; and deeply moved as well as keenly stung, he rose at length to depart; her hand lay passive in his parting clasp, and a slight shiver went over her frame.

"Farewell, Edith; when I return from Windshore, I shall be at my old home yonder, and we shall meet again."

Edith's lips murmured inaudibly, and she bent her eyes to the ground.

Slowly Harold regained his steed, and as he rode on, he looked behind and waved oft his hand. But Edith sate motionless, her eyes still on the ground, and he saw not the tears that fell from them fast and burning; nor heard he the low voice that groaned amidst the heathen ruins, "Mary, sweet mother, shelter me from my own heart!"

The sun had set before Harold gained the long and spacious abode of his father. All

around it lay the roofs and huts of the great Earl's special tradesmen, for even his goldsmith was but his freed ceorl. The house itself stretched far from the Thames inland, with several low courts built only of timber, rugged and shapeless, but filled with bold men, then the great furniture of a noble's halls.

Amidst the shouts of hundreds, eager to hold his stirrup, the Earl dismounted, passed the swarming hall, and entered the room, in which he found Hilda, and Githa,—and Godwin, who had preceded his entry but a few minutes.

In the beautiful reverence of son to father, which made one of the loveliest features of the Saxon character* (as the frequent want of it makes the most hateful of the Norman vices), the all-powerful Harold bowed his knee to the old Earl, who placed his hand on his head in benediction, and then kissed him on the cheek and brow.

"Thy kiss, too, dear mother," said the younger Earl; and Githa's embrace, if more cordial than her lord's, was not, perhaps, more fond.

"Greet Hilda, my son," said Godwin, "she hath brought me a gift, and she hath tarried to place it under thy special care. Thou alone must heed the treasure, and open the casket. But when and where, my kinswoman?"

"On the sixth day after thy coming to the King's hall," answered Hilda, not returning the smile with which Godwin spoke,—"on the sixth day, Harold, open the chest, and take out the robe which hath been spun in the house of Hilda for Godwin the Earl. And now, Godwin, I have clasped thine hand, and I have looked on thy brow, and my mission is done; and I must wend homeward."

"That shalt thou not, Hilda," said the hospitable Earl; "the meanest wayfarer hath a right to bed and board in this house for a night and a day, and thou wilt not disgrace us by leaving our threshold, the bread unbroken, and the couch unpressed. Old friend, we were young together, and thy face is welcome to me as the memory of former days."

Hilda shook her head, and one of those rare, and for that reason most touching, expressions of tenderness of which the calm and rigid character of her features, when in repose, seemed scarcely susceptible, softened her eye, and relaxed the firm lines of her lips.

"Son of Wolnoth," said she gently, "not under thy roof-tree should lodge the raven of bode. Bread have I not broken since yestere'en, and sleep will be far from my eyes to-night. Fear not, for my people without are stout and armed, and for the rest there lives not the man whose arm can have power over Hilda."

She took Harold's hand as she spoke, and leading him forth, whispered in his ear, "I would have a word with thee ere we part." Then, reaching the threshold, she waved her wand thrice over the floor, and muttered in the Danish tongue a rude verse, which, translated, ran somewhat thus:—

> "All free from the knot
> Glide the thread of the skein,
> And rest to the labor,
> And peace to the pain!"

"It is a death-dirge," said Githa, with whitening lips, but she spoke inly, and neither husband nor son heard her words.

Hilda and Harold passed in silence through the hall, and the Vala's attendants, with spears and torches, rose from the settles, and went before to the outer court, where snorted impatiently her black palfrey.

Halting in the midst of the court, she said to Harold in a low voice—

"At sunset we part—at sunset we shall meet again. And behold, the star rises on the sunset; and the star, broader and brighter, shall rise on the sunset then! When thy hand draws the robe from the chest, think on Hilda, and know that at that hour, she stands by the grave of the Saxon warrior, and that from the grave dawns the future. Farewell to thee!"

Harold longed to speak to her of Edith, but a strange awe at his heart chained his lips; so he stood silent by the great wooden gates of the rude house. The torches flamed round him, and Hilda's face seemed lurid in

* The chronicler, however, laments that the household ties, formerly so strong with the Anglo-Saxon, had been much weakened in the age prior to the Conquest.

the glare. There he stood musing long after torch and ceorl had passed away, nor did he wake from his reverie till Gurth, springing from his panting horse, passed his arm round the Earl's shoulder, and cried—

"How did I miss thee, my brother? and why didst thou forsake thy train?"

"I will tell thee anon. Gurth, has my father ailed? There is that in his face which I like not."

"He hath not complained of misease," saith Gurth, startled; "but now thou speakest of it, his mood hath altered of late, and he hath wandered much alone, or only with the old hound and the old falcon."

Then Harold turned back, and his heart was full; and, when he reached the house, his father was sitting in the hall on his chair of state; and Githa sate on his right hand, and a little below her sate Tostig and Leofwine, who had come in from the bear-hunt by the river-gate, and were talking loud and merrily; and thegns and cnehts sate all around, and there was wassail as Harold entered. But the Earl looked only to his father, and he saw that his eyes were absent from the glee, and that he was bending his head over the old falcon, which sate on his wrist.

CHAPTER III.

No subject of England, since the race of Cerdic sate on the throne, ever entered the court-yard of Windshore with such train and such state as Earl Godwin.—Proud of that first occasion, since his return, to do homage to him with whose cause that of England against the stranger was bound, all truly English at heart amongst the thegns of the land swelled his retinue. Whether Saxon or Dane, those who alike loved the laws and the soil, came from north and from south to the peaceful banner of the old Earl. But most of these were of the past generation, for the rising race were still dazzled by the pomp of the Norman; and the fashion of English manners, and the pride in English deeds, had gone out of date with long locks and bearded chins. Nor there, were the bishops and abbots and the lords of the Church,—for dear to them already the fame of the Norman piety, and they shared the distaste of their holy King to the strong sense and homely religion of Godwin, who founded no convents, and rode to war with no relics round his neck. But they with Godwin were the stout and the frank and the free, in whom rested the pith and marrow of English manhood; and they who were against him were the blind and willing and fated fathers of slaves unborn.

Not then the stately castle we now behold, which is of the masonry of a prouder race, nor on the same site, but two miles distant on the winding of the river shore (whence it took its name), a rude building partly of timber and partly of Roman brick, adjoining a large monastery and surrounded by a small hamlet, constituted the palace of the saint-king.

So rode the Earl and his four fair sons, all abreast, into the court-yard of Windshore.* Now when King Edward heard the tramp of the steeds and the hum of the multitudes, as he sate in his closet with his abbots and priests, all in still contemplation of the thumb of St. Jude, the king asked,—

"What army, in the day of peace, and the time of Easter, enters the gates of our palace?"

Then an abbot rose and looked out of the narrow window, and said with a groan,—

"Army thou may'st well call it, O King!—and foes to us and to thee head the legions.——"

"*Inprinis*," quoth our abbot the scholar; "thou speakest, I trow, of the wicked Earl and his sons."

The King's face changed. "Come they," said he, "with so large a train? This smells more of vaunt than of loyalty: naught—very naught."

"Alack!" said one of the conclave, "I fear me that the men of Belial will work us harm; the heathen are mighty, and——"

"Fear not," said Edward, with benign

* Some authorities state Winchester as the scene of these memorable festivities. Old Windsor Castle is supposed by Mr. Lysons to have occupied the site of a farm of Mr. Isherwood's, surrounded by a moat, about two miles distant from New Windsor. He conjectures that it was still occasionally inhabited by the Norman kings till 1110. The ville surrounding it only contained ninety-five houses, paying gabel-tax, in the Norman survey.

loftiness, observing that his guests grew pale, and himself, though often weak to childishness, and morally wavering and irresolute,—still so far king and gentleman, that he knew no craven fear of the body. "Fear not for me, my fathers; humble as I am, I am strong in the faith of heaven and its angels."

The Churchmen looked at each other, sly yet abashed; it was not precisely for the King that they feared.

Then spoke Alred, the good prelate and constant peace-maker—fair column and lone one of the fast-crumbling Saxon Church. "It is ill in you, brethren, to arraign the truth and good meaning of those who honor your King; and in these days that lord should ever be the most welcome who brings to the halls of his king the largest number of hearts, stout and leal!"

"By your leave, brother Alred," said Stigand, who, though from motives of policy he had aided those who besought the King not to peril his crown by resisting the return of Godwin, benefited too largely by the abuses of the Church to be sincerely espoused to the cause of the strong-minded Earl; "By your leave, brother Alred, to every leal heart is a ravenous mouth; and the treasures of the King are wellnigh drained in feeding these hungry and welcomeless visitors. Durst I counsel my lord, I would pray him, as a matter of policy, to baffle this astute and proud Earl. He would fain have the King feast in public, that he might daunt him and the Church with the array of his friends."

"I conceive thee, my father," said Edward, with more quickness than habitual, and with the cunning, sharp though guileless, that belongs to minds undeveloped, "I conceive thee; it is good and most politic. This our orgulous Earl shall not have his triumph, and, so fresh from his exile, brave his King with the mundane parade of his power. Our health is our excuse for our absence from the banquet, and, sooth to say, we marvel much why Easter should be held a fitting time for feasting and mirth. Wherefore, Hugoline, my chamberlain, advise the Earl, that to-day we keep fast till the sunset, when temperately, with eggs, bread, and fish, we will sustain Adam's nature. Pray him and his sons to attend us—they alone be our guests." And with a sound that seemed a laugh, or the ghost of a laugh, low and chuckling—for Edward had at moments an innocent humor which his monkish biographer disdained not to note,*—he flung himself back in his chair. The priests took the cue, and shook their sides heartily, as Hugoline left the room, not ill pleased, by the way, to escape an invitation to the eggs, bread, and fish.

Alred sighed; and said, "For the Earl and his sons, this is honor; but the other earls, and the thegns, will miss at the banquet him whom they design but to honor, and—"

"I have said," interrupted Edward, drily, and with a look of fatigue.

"And," observed another Churchman, with malice, "at least the young Earls will be humbled, for they will not sit with the King and their father, as they would in the Hall, and must serve my lord with napkin and wine."

"*Inprimis*," quoth our scholar the abbot, "that will be rare! I would I were by to see. But this Godwin is a man of treachery and wile, and my lord should beware of the fate of murdered Alfred, his brother!"

The King started, and pressed his hands to his eyes.

"How darest thou, Abbot of Fatchere," cried Alred, indignantly; "How darest thou revive grief without remedy, and slander without proof?"

"Without proof?" echoed Edward, in a hollow voice. "He who could murder, could well stoop to forswear! Without proof before man; but did he try the ordeals of God?—did his feet pass the ploughshare?—did his hand grasp the seething iron? Verily, verily, thou didst wrong to name to me Alfred my brother! I shall see his sightless and gore-dropping sockets in the face of Godwin, this day, at my board."

The King rose in great disorder; and after pacing the room some moments, disregardful of the silent and scared looks of his Churchmen, waved his hand, in sign to them to depart. All took the hint at once save Alred; but he, lingering the last, approached the King with dignity in his step and compassion in his eyes.

* AILRED, *de Vit. Edward Confess.*

"Banish from thy breast, O King and son, thoughts unmeet, and of doubtful charity! All that man could know of Godwin's innocence or guilt—the suspicion of the vulgar—the acquittal of his peers,—was known to thee before thou didst seek his aid for thy throne, and didst take his child for thy wife. Too late is it now to suspect; leave thy doubts to the solemn day, which draws nigh to the old man, thy wife's father!"

"Ha!" said the King, seeming not to heed, or wilfully to misunderstand the prelate, "Ha, leave him to God;—I will!"

He turned away impatiently; and the prelate reluctantly departed.

CHAPTER IV.

Tostig chafed mightily at the King's message; and, on Harold's attempt to pacify him, grew so violent that nothing short of the cold stern command of his father, who carried with him that weight of authority never known but to those in whom wrath is still and passion noiseless, imposed sullen peace on his son's rugged nature. But the taunts heaped by Tostig upon Harold disquieted the old Earl, and his brow was yet sad with prophetic care when he entered the royal apartments. He had been introduced into the King's presence but a moment before Hugoline led the way to the chamber of repast, and the greeting between King and Earl had been brief and formal.

Under the canopy of state were placed but two chairs, for the King and the Queen's father; and the four sons, Harold, Tostig, Leofwine, and Gurth, stood behind. Such was the primitive custom of ancient Teutonic kings; and the feudal Norman monarchs only enforced, though with more pomp and more rigor, the ceremonial of the forest patriarchs—youth to wait on age, and the ministers of the realm on those whom their policy had made chiefs in council and war.

The Earl's mind, already embittered by the scene with his sons, was chafed yet more by the King's unloving coldness; for it is natural to man, however worldly, to feel affection for those he has served, and Godwin had won Edward his crown; nor, despite his warlike though bloodless return, could even monk or Norman, in counting up the old Earl's crimes, say that he had ever failed in personal respect to the King he had made; nor over-great for subject, as the Earl's power must be confessed, will historian now be found to say that it had not been well for Saxon England if Godwin had found more favor with his King, and monk and Norman less.*

So the old Earl's stout heart was stung, and he looked from those deep, impenetrable eyes, mournfully upon Edward's chilling brow.

And Harold, with whom all household ties were strong, but to whom his great father was especially dear, watched his face and saw that it was very flushed. But the practised courtier sought to rally his spirits, and to smile and jest.

From smile and jest, the King turned and asked for wine. Harold, starting, advanced with the goblet; as he did so, he stumbled with one foot, but lightly recovered himself with the other; and Tostig laughed scornfully at Harold's awkwardness.

The old Earl observed both stumble and laugh, and willing to suggest a lesson to both his sons, said—laughing pleasantly—"Lo, Harold, how the left foot saves the right!—so one brother, thou seest, helps the other!" †

King Edward looked up suddenly.

"And so, Godwin, also, had my brother Alfred helped me, hadst thou permitted."

The old Earl, galled to the quick, gazed a moment on the King, and his cheek was purple, and his eyes seemed bloodshot.

"O Edward!" he exclaimed, "thou speakest to me hardly and unkindly of thy brother Alfred, and often hast thou thus more than hinted that I caused his death."

The King made no answer.

"May this crumb of bread choke me,"

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* "Is it astonishing," asked the people (referring to Edward's preference of the Normans), "that the author and support of Edward's reign should be indignant at seeing new men from a foreign nation raised above him, and yet never does he utter one harsh word to the man whom he himself created king."—Hazlitt's *Thierry*, vol. i. p. 126.

This is the English account (*versus* the Norman). There can be little doubt that it is the true one.

† Henry of Huntingdon, etc.

said the Earl, in great emotion, "if I am guilty of thy brother's blood!"*

But scarcely had the bread touched his lips, when his eyes fixed, the long warning symptoms were fulfilled. And he fell to the ground, under the table, sudden and heavy, smitten by the stroke of apoplexy.

Harold and Gurth sprang forward, they drew their father from the ground. His face, still deep-red with streaks of purple, rested on Harold's breast; and the son, kneeling, called in anguish on his father: the ear was deaf.

Then said the King, rising,—

"It is the hand of God: remove him!" and he swept from the room, exulting.

CHAPTER V.

For five days and five nights did Godwin lie speechless.† And Harold watched over him night and day. And the leaches ‡ would not bleed him, because the season was against it, in the increase of the moon and the tides, but they bathed his temples with wheat flour boiled in milk, according to a prescription which an angel in a dream § had advised to another patient; and they placed a plate of lead on his breast, marked with five crosses, saying a paternoster over each cross; together with other medical specifics in great esteem. ‖ But, nevertheless, five days and five nights did Godwin lie speechless; and the leaches then feared that human skill was in vain.

The effect produced on the court, not more by the Earl's death-stroke that the circumstances preceding it, was such as defies description. With Godwin's old comrades in arms it was simple and honest grief; but with all those under the influence of the priests, the event was regarded as a direct punishment from Heaven. The previous words of the King, repeated by Edward to his monks, circulated from lip to lip, with sundry exaggerations as it travelled; and the superstition of the day had the more excuse, inasmuch as the speech of Godwin touched near upon the defiance of one of the most popular ordeals of the accused,—viz. that called the "corsned," in which a piece of bread was given to the supposed criminal; if he swallowed it with ease he was innocent; if it stuck in his throat, or choked him, nay, if he shook and turned pale, he was guilty. Godwin's words had appeared to invite the ordeal, God had heard and stricken down the presumptuous perjurer!

Unconscious, happily, of these attempts to blacken the name of his dying father, Harold, towards the gray dawn succeeding the fifth night, thought that he heard Godwin stir in his bed. So he put aside the curtain, and bent over him. The old Earl's eyes were wide open, and the red color had gone from his cheeks, so that he was pale as death.

"How fares it, dear father?" asked Harold.

Godwin smiled fondly, and tried to speak, but his voice died in a convulsive rattle. Lifting himself up, however, with an effort, he pressed tenderly the hand that clasped his own, leant his head on Harold's breast, and so gave up the ghost.

When Harold was at last aware that the struggle was over, he laid the gray head gently on the pillow; he closed the eyes, and kissed the lips, and knelt down and prayed. Then, seating himself at a little distance, he covered his face with his mantle.

At this time his brother Gurth, who had chiefly shared watch with Harold,—for Tostig, foreseeing his father's death, was busy soliciting thegn and earl to support his own claims to the earldom about to be vacant; and Leofwine had gone to London on the previous day to summon Githa who was hourly expected—Gurth, I say, entered the room on tiptoe, and seeing his brother's attitude, guessed that all was over. He passed on to the table, took up the lamp, and long looked on his father's face. That strange smile of the dead, common alike to innocent and guilty, had already settled on the serene lips; and that no less strange transformation from age to youth, when the wrinkles vanish, and the features come out clear and sharp from the hollows of care and years, had already

* Henry of Huntingdon; Bromt. Chron. etc.

† Hoveden.

‡ The origin of the word leach (physician), which has puzzled some inquirers, is from *lich*, or *leac*, a body. *Leich* is the old Saxon word for surgeon.

§ Sharon Turner, vol. i. p. 472.

‖ Fosbrooke.

begun. And the old man seemed sleeping in his prime.

So Gurth kissed the dead, as Harold had done before him, and came up and sate himself by his brother's feet, and rested his head on Harold's knee; nor would he speak till, appalled by the long silence of the Earl, he drew away the mantle from his brother's face with a gentle hand, and the large tears were rolling down Harold's cheeks.

"Be soothed, my brother," said Gurth; "our father has lived for glory, his age was prosperous, and his years more than those which the Psalmist allots to man. Come and look on his face, Harold; its calm will comfort thee."

Harold obeyed the hand that led him like a child; in passing towards the bed, his eye fell upon the cyst which Hilda had given to the old Earl, and a chill shot through his veins.

"Gurth," said he, "is not this the morning of the sixth day in which we have been at the King's Court?"

"It is the morning of the sixth day."

Then Harold took forth the key which Hilda had given him, and unlocked the cyst, and there lay the white winding-sheet of the dead, and a scroll. Harold took the scroll, and bent over it, reading by the mingled light of the lamp and the dawn:—

"All hail, Harold, heir of Godwin the great, and Githa the king-born! Thou hast obeyed Hilda, and thou knowest now that Hilda's eyes read the future, and her lips speak the dark words of truth. Bow thy heart to the Vala, and mistrust the wisdom that sees only the things of the daylight. As the valor of the warrior and the song of the scald, so is the lore of the prophetess. It is not of the body, it is soul within soul; it marshals events and men, like the valor—it moulds the air into substance, like the song. Bow thy heart to the Vala. Flowers bloom over the grave of the dead. And the young plant soars high, when the king of the woodland lies low!"

CHAPTER VI.

The sun rose, and the stairs and passages without were filled with the crowds that pressed to hear news of the Earl's health. The doors stood open, and Gurth led in the multitude to look their last on the hero of council and camp, who had restored with strong hand and wise brain the race of Cerdic to the Saxon throne. Harold stood by the bed-head silent, and tears were shed and sobs were heard. And many a thegn who had before half believed in the guilt of Godwin as the murderer of Alfred, whispered in gasps to his neighbor,—

"There is no weregeld for manslaying on the head of him, who smiles so in death on his old comrades in life!"

Last of all lingered Leofric, the great Earl of Mercia; and when the rest had departed, he took the pale hand, that lay heavy on the coverlid, in his own, and said—

"Old foe, often stood we in Witan and field against each other; but few are the friends for whom Leofric would mourn as he mourns for thee. Peace to thy soul! Whatever its sins, England should judge thee mildly, for England bea in each pulse of thy heart, and with thy greatness was her own!"

Then Harold stole round the bed, and put his arms round Leofric's neck, and embraced him. The good old Earl was touched, and he laid his tremulous hands on Harold's brown locks and blessed him.

"Harold," he said, "thou succeedest to thy father's power: let thy father's foes be thy friends. Wake from thy grief, for thy country now demands thee,—the honor of thy House, and the memory of the dead. Many even now plot against thee and thine. Seek the King, demand as thy right thy father's earldom, and Leofric will back thy claim in the Witan."

Harold pressed Leofric's hand, and raising it to his lips replied—"Be our houses at peace henceforth and for ever!"

Tostig's vanity indeed misled him, when he dreamed that any combination of Godwin's party could meditate supporting his claims against the popular Harold—nor less did the monks deceive themselves, when they supposed, that with Godwin's death, the power of his family would fall.

There was more than even the unanimity of the chiefs of the Witan, in favor of Harold; there was that universal noiseless impression throughout all England, Danish and Saxon, that Harold was now the sole man on whom rested the state—which, whenever it so favors one individual, is irresistible. Nor was Edward himself hostile to Harold, whom alone of that House, as we have before said, he esteemed and loved.

Harold was at once named Earl of Wessex; and relinquishing the earldom he held before, he did not hesitate as to the successor to be recommended in his place. Conquering all jealousy and dislike for Algar, he united the strength of his party in favor of the son of Leofric, and the election fell upon him. With all his hot errors, the claims of no other Earl, whether from his own capacities or his father's services, were so strong; and his election probably saved the state from a great danger, in the results of that angry mood and that irritated ambition with which he had thrown himself into the arms of England's most valiant aggressor, Gryffyth, King of North Wales.

To outward appearance, by this election, the House of Leofric—uniting in father and son the two mighty districts of Mercia and the East Anglians—became more powerful than that of Godwin; for, in that last House, Harold was now the only possessor of one of the great earldoms, and Tostig and the other brothers had no other provision beyond the comparatively insignificant lordships they held before. But if Harold had ruled no earldom at all, he had still been immeasurably the first man in England—so great was the confidence reposed in his valor and wisdom. He was of that height in himself, that he needed no pedestal to stand on.

The successor of the first great founder of a House succeeds to more than his predecessor's power, if he but know how to wield and maintain it. For who makes his way to greatness without raising foes at every step? and who ever rose to power supreme, without grave cause for blame? But Harold stood free from the enmities his father had provoked, and pure from the stains that slander or repute cast upon his father's name. The sun of the yesterday had shone through cloud; the sun of the day rose in a clear firmament. Even Tostig recognized the superiority of his brother; and after a strong struggle between baffled rage and covetous ambition, yielded to him, as to a father. He felt that all Godwin's house was centred in Harold alone; and that only from his brother (despite his own daring valor, and despite his alliance with the blood of Charlemagne and Alfred, through the sister of Matilda, the Norman duchess,) could his avarice of power be gratified.

'Depart to thy home, my brother," said Earl Harold to Tostig, "and grieve not that Algar is preferred to thee. For, even had his claim been less urgent, ill would it have beseemed us to arrogate the lordships of all England as our dues. Rule thy lordship with wisdom: gain the love of thy lithsmen. High claims hast thou in our father's name, and moderation now will but strengthen thee in the season to come. Trust on Harold somewhat, on thyself more. Thou hast but to add temper and judgment to valor and zeal, to be worthy mate of the first earl in England. Over my father's corpse I embraced my father's foe. Between brother and brother shall there not be love, as the best bequest of the dead?"

"It shall not be my fault, if there be not," answered Tostig, humbled though chafed. And he summoned his men and returned to his domains.

CHAPTER VII.

Fair, broad, and calm set the sun over the western woodlands. And Hilda stood on the mound, and looked with undazzled eyes on the sinking orb. Beside her, Edith reclined on the sward, and seemed with idle hand tracing characters in the air. The girl had grown paler still, since Harold last parted from her on the same spot, and the same listless and despondent apathy stamped her smileless lips and her bended head.

"See, child of my heart," said Hilda, addressing Edith, while she still gazed on the western luminary, "see, the sun goes down to the far deeps, where Rana and Ægir*

* *Ægir*, the Scandinavian god of the ocean. Not one of the Aser, or Asas (the celestial race), but

watch over the worlds of the sea; but with morning he comes from the halls of the Asas—the golden gates of the East—and joy comes in his train. And yet thou thinkest, sad child, whose years have scarce passed into woman, that the sun, once set, never comes back to life! But even while we speak, thy morning draws near, and the dunness of cloud takes the hues of the rose!"

Edith's hand paused from its vague employment, and fell droopingly on her knee;—she turned with an unquiet and anxious eye to Hilda, and after looking some moments wistfully at the Vala, the color rose to her cheek, and she said in a voice that had an accent half of anger—

"Hilda, thou art cruel!"

"So is Fate!" answered the Vala. "But men call not Fate cruel when it smiles on their desires. Why callest thou Hilda cruel, when she reads in the setting sun the runes of thy coming joy!"

"There is no joy for me," returned Edith plaintively; "and I have that on my heart," she added, with a sudden and almost fierce change of tone, "which at last I will dare to speak. I reproach thee, Hilda, that thou hast marred all my life, that thou hast duped me with dreams, and left me alone in despair."

"Speak on," said Hilda, calmly, as a nurse to a froward child.

"Hast thou not told me, from the first dawn of my wondering reason, that my life and lot were inwoven with—with (the word, mad and daring, must out) with those of Harold the peerless? But for that, which my infancy took from thy lips as a law, I had never been so vain and so frantic! I had never watched each play of his face, and treasured each word from his lips; I had never made my life but a part of his life—all my soul but the shadow of his sun. But for that, I had hailed the calm of the cloister—but for that, I had glided in peace to my grave. And now—*now*, O Hilda—" Edith paused, and that break had more eloquence than any words she could command. "And," she resumed quickly, "thou knowest that these hopes were but dreams—that the law ever stood between him and me—and that it was guilt to love him."

"I knew the law," answered Hilda, "but the law of fools is to the wise as the cobweb swung over the brake to the wing of the bird. Ye are sibbe to each other, some five times removed; and therefore an old man at Rome saith that ye ought not to wed. When the shavelings obey the old man at Rome, and put aside their own wives and frillas,* and abstain from the wine cup, and the chase, and the brawl, I will stoop to hear of their laws,—with disrelish it may be, but without scorn.† It is no sin to love Harold; and no monk and no law shall prevent your union on the day appointed to bring ye together, form and heart."

"Hilda! Hilda! madden me not with joy," cried Edith, starting up in rapturous emotion, her young face dyed with blushes, and all her renovated beauty so celestial that Hilda herself was almost awed, as if by the vision of Freya, the northern Venus, charmed by a spell from the halls of Asgard.

"But that day is distant," renewed the Vala.

"What matters! what matters!" cried the pure child of Nature; "I ask but hope. Enough,—oh! enough, if we were but wedded on the borders of the grave!"

"Lo, then," said Hilda, "behold, the sun of thy life dawns again!"

As she spoke, the Vala stretched her arm, and, through the intersticed columns of the fane, Edith saw the large shadow of a man cast over the still sward. Presently into the space of the circle came Harold, her beloved. His face was pale with grief yet recent; but, perhaps, more than ever, dignity was in his step and command on his brow, for he felt

sprung from the giants. *Ran* or *Rana*, his wife, a more malignant character, who caused shipwrecks, and drew to herself, by a net, all that fell into the sea. The offspring of this marriage were nine daughters, who became the Billows, the Currents, and the Storms.

* *Frilla*, the Danish word for a lady who, often with the wife's consent, was added to the domestic circle by the husband. The word is here used by Hilda in a general sense of reproach. Both marriage and concubinage were common amongst the Anglo-Saxon priesthood, despite the unheeded canons; and so, indeed, they were with the French clergy.

† Hilda, not only as a heathen, but as a Dane, would be no favorer of monks. They were unknown in Denmark at that time, and the Danes held them in odium.—*Ord. Vital.*, lib. vii.

that now alone with him rested the might of Saxon England. And what royal robe so invests with imperial majesty the form of man as the grave sense of power responsible, in an earnest soul?

"Thou comest," said Hilda, "in the hour I predicted; at the setting of the sun and the rising of the star."

"Vala," said Harold, gloomily, "I will not oppose my sense to thy prophecies; for who shall judge of that power of which he knows not the elements? or despise the marvel of which he cannot detect the imposture! But leave me, I pray thee, to walk in the broad light of the common day. These hands are made to grapple with things palpable, and these eyes to measure the forms that front my way. In my youth, I turned in despair or disgust from the subtleties of the schoolmen, which split upon hairs the brains of Lombard and Frank; in my busy and stirring manhood entangle me not in the meshes which confuse all my reason, and sicken my waking thoughts into dreams of awe. Mine be the straight path and the plain goal!"

The Vala gazed on him with an earnest look, that partook of admiration, and yet more of gloom; but she spoke not, and Harold resumed—

"Let the dead rest, Hilda—proud names with glory on earth, and shadows escaped from our ken, submissive to mercy in heaven. A vast chasm have my steps overleapt since we met, O Hilda—sweet Edith; —a vase chasm, but a narrow grave." His voice faltered a moment, and again he renewed,—"Thou weepest, Edith; ah, how thy tears console me! Hilda, hear me! I love thy grandchild—loved her by irresistible instinct since her blue eyes first smiled on mine. I loved her in her childhood, as in her youth—in the blossom as in the flower. And thy grandchild loves me. The laws of the Church proscribe our marriage, and therefore we parted; but I feel, and thine Edith feels, that the love remains as strong in absence: no other will be her wedded lord, no other my wedded wife. Therefore, with a heart made soft by sorrow, and, in my father's death, sole lord of my fate, I return, and say to thee in her presence, 'Suffer us to hope still!' The day may come when under some king less enthralled than Edward by formal Church laws, we may obtain from the Pope absolution for our nuptials,—a day, perhaps, far off; but we are both young, and love is strong and patient: we can wait."

"O Harold," exclaimed Edith, "we can wait!"

"Have I not told thee, son of Godwin," said the Vala, solemnly, "that Edith's skein of life was enwoven with thine? Dost thou deem that my charms have not explored the destiny of the last of my race? Know that it is in the decrees of the fates that ye are to be united, never more to be divided. Know that there shall come a day, though I can see not its morrow, and it lies dim and afar, which shall be the most glorious of thy life, and on which Edith and fame shall be thine, —the day of thy nativity, on which hitherto all things have prospered with thee. In vain against the stars preach the mone and the priest: what shall be, shall be. Wherefore, take hope and joy, O Children of Time! And now, as I join your hands, I betroth your souls."

Rapture unalloyed and unprophetic, born of love deep and pure, shone in the eyes of Harold, as he clapsed the hand of his promised bride. But an involuntary and mysterious shudder passed over Edith's frame, and she leant close, close, for support upon Harold's breast. And, as if by a vision, there rose distinct in her memory, a stern brow, a form of power and terror—the brow and the form of him who but once again in her waking life the Prophetess had told her she should behold. The vision passed away in the warm clasp of those protecting arms; and looking up into Harold's face, she there beheld the mighty and deep delight that transfused itself at once into her own soul.

Then Hilda, placing one hand over their heads, and raising the other towards heaven, all radiant with bursting stars, said in her deep and thrilling tones,—

"Attest the betrothal of these young hearts, O ye Popers that draw nature to nature by spells which no galdra can trace, and have wrought in the secrets of creation no mystery so perfect as love,—Attest it, thou temple, thou altar!—attest it, O sun and O air! While the forms are divided,

may the souls cling together—sorrow with sorrow, and joy with joy. And when, at length, bride and bridegroom are one,—O stars, may the trouble with which ye are charged have exhausted its burthen; may no danger molest, and no malice disturb, but, over the marriage-bed, shine in peace, O ye stars!"

Up rose the moon. May's nightingale called its mate from the breathless boughs; and so Edith and Harold were betrothed by the grave of the son of Cerdic. And from the line of Cerdic had come, since Ethelbert, all the Saxon kings who with sword and with sceptre had reigned over Saxon England.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

AMBITION.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was great rejoicing in England. King Edward had been induced to send Alred the prelate* to the court of the German Emperor, for his kinsman and namesake, Edward Atheling, the son of the great Ironsides. In his childhood, this Prince, with his brother Edmund, had been committed by Canute to the charge of his vassal, the King of Sweden; and it has been said (though without sufficient authority), that Canute's design was, that they should be secretly made away with. The King of Sweden, however, forwarded the children to the court of Hungary; they were there honorably reared and received. Edmund died young, without issue. Edward married a daughter of the German Emperor, and during the commotions in England, and the successive reigns of Harold Harefoot, Hardicanute, and the Confessor, had remained forgotten in his exile, until now suddenly recalled to England as the heir presumptive of his childless namesake. He arrived with Agatha his wife, one infant son Edgar, and two daughters, Margaret and Christina.

Great were the rejoicings. The vast crowd that had followed the royal visitors in their procession to the old London palace (not far from St. Paul's), in which they were lodged, yet swarmed through the streets, when two thegns who had personally accompanied the Atheling from Dover, and had just taken leave of him, now emerged from the palace, and with some difficulty made their way through the crowded streets.

* Chron. Knyghton.

The one in the dress and short hair imitated from the Norman, was our old friend Godrith, whom the reader may remember as the rebuker of Taillefer, and the friend of Mallet de Graville; the other, in a plain linen Saxon tunic, and the gonna worn on state occasions, to which he seemed unfamiliar, but with heavy gold bracelets on his arms, long haired and bearded, was Vebba, the Kentish thegn, who had served as nuncius from Godwin to Edward.

"Troth and faith!" said Vebba, wiping his brow, "this crowd is enow to make plain man stark wode. I would not live in London for all the gauds in the goldsmiths' shops, or all the treasures in King Edward's vaults. My tongue is as parched as a hayfield in the weyd-month.* Holy Mother be blessed! I see a *Cumen-hus*† open; let us in and refresh ourselves with a horn of ale."

"Nay, friend," quoth Godrith, with a slight disdain, "such are not the resorts of men of our rank. Tarry yet awhile, till we arrive near the bridge by the river side; there, indeed, you will find worthy company and dainty cheer."

"Well, well, I am at your best, Godrith," said the Kent man, sighing: "my wife and my sons will be sure to ask me what sights I have seen, and I may as well know from thee the last tricks and ways of this hurly-burly town."

Godrith, who was master of all the fashions in the reign of our lord King Edward, smiled graciously, and the two proceeded in silence, only broken by the sturdy Kent man's exclamations; now of anger when rudely jos-

* *Weyd-month.* Meadow month, June.
† *Cumen-hus.* Tavern.

tled, now of wonder and delight when, amidst the throng, he caught sight of a gleeman, with his bear or monkey, who took advantage of some space near convent garden, or Roman ruin, to exhibit his craft; till they gained a long low row of booths, most pleasantly situated to the left of this side London bridge, and which was appropriated to the celebrated cookshops, that even to the time of Fitzstephen retained their fame and their fashion.

Between the shops and the river, was a space of grass worn brown and bare by the feet of the customers, with a few clipped trees with vines trained from one to the other in arcades, under cover of which were set tables and settles. The place was thickly crowded, and but for Godrith's popularity amongst the attendants, they might have found it difficult to obtain accommodation. However, a new table was soon brought forth, placed close by the cool margin of the water, and covered in a trice with tankards of hippocras, pigment, ale, and some Gascon, as well as British wines; varieties of the delicious cake-bread for which England was then renowned; while viands strange to the honest eye and taste of the wealthy Kent man, were served on spits.

"What bird is this?" said he, grumbling.

"O enviable man, it is a Phrygian attagen * that thou art about to taste for the first time; and when thou hast recovered that delight, I commend to thee a Moorish compound, made of eggs and roes of carp from the old Southweore stewponds, which the cooks here dress notably."

"Moorish!—Holy Virgin!" cried Vebba, with his mouth full of the Phrygian attagen, "how came anything Moorish in our Christian island?"

Godrith laughed outright.

"Why, our cook here is Moorish; the best singers in London are Moors. Look yonder! see those grave comely Saracens!"

"Comely, quotha, burnt and black as a charred pine-pole!" grunted Vebba; "well, who are they?"

"Wealthy traders; thanks to whom, our pretty maids have risen high in the market." †

"More the shame," said the Kent man; "that selling of English youth to foreign masters, whether male or female, is a blot on the Saxon name."

"So saith Harold our Earl, and so preach the monks," returned Godrith. "But thou, my good friend, who art fond of all things that our ancestors did, and hast sneered more than once at my Norman robe and cropped hair, *thou* shouldst not be the one to find fault with what our fathers have done since the days of Cerdic."

"Hem," sent the Kent man, a little perplexed, "certainly old manners are the best, and I suppose there is some good reason for this practice, which I, who never trouble myself about matters that concern me not, do not see."

"Well, Vebba, and how likest thou the Atheling? he is of the old line," said Godrith.

Again the Kent man looked perplexed, and had recourse to the ale, which he preferred to all more delicate liquor, before he replied—

"Why, he speaks English worse than King Edward! and as for his boy Edgar, the child can scarce speak English at all. And then their German carles and cnehts!—An I had known what manner of folk they were, I had not spent my *mancuses* in running from my homestead to give them the welcome. But they told me that Harold the good Earl had made the King send for them; and whatever the Earl counselled, must I thought be wise, and to the weal of sweet England."

"That is true," said Godrith with earnest emphasis, for, with all his affectation of Norman manners, he was thoroughly English at heart, and was now among the staunchest supporters of Harold, who had become no less the pattern and pride of the young nobles than the darling of the humbler population,—"that is true—and Harold showed us his noble English heart when he so urged the King to his own loss."

As Godrith thus spoke, nay, from the first mention of Harold's name, two men richly clad, but with their bonnets drawn far over their brows, and their long gonnas so worn as to hide their forms, who were seated at a table behind Godrith and had thus escaped his attention, had paused from their wine-

* Fitzstephen.

† William of Malmesbury speaks with just indignation of the Anglo-Saxon custom of selling female servants, either to public prostitution, or foreign slavery.

cups, and they now listened with much earnestness to the conversation that followed.

"How to the Earl's loss?" asked Vebba.

"Why, simple thegn," answered Godrith, "why, suppose that Edward had refused to acknowledge the Atheling as his heir, suppose the Atheling had remained in the German court, and our good King died suddenly, —who, thinkest thou, could succeed to the English throne?"

"Marry, I have never thought of that at all," said the Kent man, scratching his head.

"No, nor have the English generally; yet whom could we choose but Harold?"

A sudden start from one of the listeners was checked by the warning finger of the other; and the Kent man exclaimed—

"Body o' me! But we have never chosen king (save the Danes) out of the line of Cerdic. These be new cranks, with a vengeance; we shall be choosing German, or Saracen, or Norman next!"

"Out of the line of Cerdic! but that line is gone, root and branch, save the Atheling, and he thou seest is more German than English. Again I say, failing the Atheling, whom could we choose but Harold, brother-in-law to the King; descended through Githa from the royalties of the Norse, the head of all armies under the Herr-ban, the chief who has never fought without victory, yet who has always preferred conciliation to conquest—the first counsellor in the Witan—the first man in the realm—who but Harold? answer me, staring Vebba?"

"I take in thy words slowly," said the Kent man, shaking his head, "and after all, it matters little who is king, so he be a good one. Yes, I see now that the Earl was a just and generous man when he made the King send for the Atheling. Drink-hæl! long life to them both!"

"Was-hæl," answered Godrith, draining his hippocras to Vebba's more potent ale. "Long life to them both! may Edward the Atheling reign, but Harold the Earl rule! Ah, then, indeed, we may sleep without fear of fierce Algar and still fiercer Gryffyth the Walloon—who now, it is true, are stilled for the moment, thanks to Harold—but not more still than the smooth waters in Gwyned, that lie just above the rush of a torrent."

"So little news hear I," said Vebba, "and in Kent so little are we plagued with the troubles elsewhere (for there Harold governs us, and the hawks come not where the eagles hold eyrie!)—that I will thank thee to tell me something about our old Earl for a year,* Algar the restless, and this Gryffyth the Welch King, so that I may seem a wise man when I go back to my homestead."

"Why, thou knowest at least that Algar and Harold were ever opposed in the Witan, and hot words thou hast heard pass between them?"

'Marry, yes! But Algar was as little match for Earl Harold in speech as in sword play."

Now again one of the listeners started (but it was not the same as the one before), and muttered an angry exclamation.

"Yet is he a troublesome foe," said Godrith, who did not hear the sound Vebba had provoked, "and a thorn in the side both of the Earl and of England; and sorrowful for both England and Earl was it, that Harold refused to marry Aldyth, as it is said his father, wise Godwin, counselled and wished."

"Ah! but I have heard scops and harpers sing pretty songs that Harold loves Edith the Fair, a wondrous proper maiden, they say!"

"It is true; and for the sake of his love, he played ill for his ambition."

"I like him the better for that," said the honest Kent man: "why does he not marry the girl at once? she hath broad lands, I know, for they run from the Sussex shore into Kent."

"But they are cousins five times removed, and the Church forbids the marriage; nevertheless Harold lives only for Edith; they have exchanged the true-lofa,† and it is whispered that Harold hopes the Atheling, when he comes to be King, will get him the Pope's dispensasion. But to return to Algar; in a day most unlucky he gave his daughter

* It will be remembered that Algar governed Wessex, which principality included Kent, during the year of Godwin's outlawry.

† *Trulofa*, from which comes our popular corruption "true lover's knot;" *a veteri Danico* trulofa, i. e. *fidem do*, to pledge faith.—HICKES' *Thesaur.*

"A knot, among the ancient northern nations, seems to have been the emblem of love, faith, and friendship."—BRANDE's *Pop. Antiq.*

to Gryffyth, the most turbulent sub-king the land ever knew, who, it is said, will not be content till he has won all Wales for himself without homage or service, and the Marches to boot. Some letters between him and Earl Algar, to whom Harold had secured the earldom of the East Angles, were discovered, and in a Witan at Winchester thou wilt doubtless have heard, (for thou didst not, I know, leave thy lands to attend it,) that Algar * wastoutlawed."

"Oh, yes, these are stale tidings; I heard thus much from a palmer—and then Algar got ships from the Irish, sailed to North Wales, and beat Rolf, the Norman Earl, at Hereford. Oh, yes, I heard that, and," added the Kent man laughing, "I was not sorry to hear that my old Earl Algar, since he is a good and true Saxon, beat the cowardly Norman,—more shame to the King for giving a Norman the ward of the Marches!"

"It was a sore defeat to the King and to England," said Godrith, gravely. "The great Minster of Hereford built by King Athelstan was burned and sacked by the Welch; and the crown itself was in danger, when Harold came up at the head of the Fyrd. Hard is it to tell the distress and the marching and the camping, and the travail, and destruction of men, and also of horses, which the English endured † till Harold came; and then luckily came also the good old Leofric, and Bishop Alred the peacemaker, and so strife was patched up—Gryffyth swore oaths of faith to King Edward, and Algar was inlawed; and there for the nonce rests the matter now. But well I ween that Gryffyth will never keep troth with the English, and that no hand less strong than Harold's can keep in check a spirit as fiery as Algar's: therefore did I wish that Harold might be King."

"Well," quoth the honest Kent man, "I hope, nevertheless, that Algar will sow his wild oats, and leave the Walloons to grow the hemp for their own halters; for, though he is not of the height of our Harold, he is a true Saxon, and we liked him well enow when he ruled us. And how is our Earl's brother Tostig esteemed by the Northmen? It must be hard to please those who had Siward of the strong arm for their Earl before."

"Why, at first, when (at Siward's death in the wars for young Malcolm) Harold secured to Tostig the Northumbrian earldom, Tostig went by his brother's council, and ruled well and won favor. Of late I hear that the Northmen murmur. Tostig is a man indeed dour and haughty."

After a few more questions and answers on the news of the day, Vebba rose and said,—

"Thanks for thy good fellowship; it is time for me now to be jogging homeward. I left my ceorls and horses on the other side the river, and must go after them. And now forgive me my bluntness, fellow thegn, but ye young courtiers have plenty of need for your *mancuses*, and when a plain countrymen like me comes sight-seeing, he ought to stand payment; wherefore," here he took from his belt a great leathern purse, "wherefore, as these outlandish birds and heathenish puddings must be dear fare—"

"How!" said Godrith, reddening, "thinkest thou so meanly of us thegns of Middlesex as to deem we cannot entertain thus humbly a friend from a distance? Ye Kent men I know are rich. But keep your pennies to buy stuffs for your wife, my friend."

The Kent man, seeing he had displeased his companion, did not press his liberal offer,—put up his purse, and suffered Godrith to pay the reckoning. Then, as the two thegns shook hands, he said,—

"But I should like to have said a kind word or so to Earl Harold—for he was too busy and too great for me to come across him in the old palace yonder. I have a

* The *Saxon Chronicle* contradicts itself as to Algar's outlawry, stating in one passage that he was outlawed without any kind of guilt, and in another that he was outlawed as *swike*, or traitor, and that he made a confession of it before all the men there gathered. His treason, however, seems naturally occasioned by his close connection with Gryffyth, and proved by his share in that king's rebellion. Some of our historians have unfairly assumed that his outlawry was at Harold's instigation. Of this there is not only no proof, but one of the best authorities among the chroniclers says just the contrary,—that Harold did all he could to intercede for him; and it is certain that he was fairly tried and condemned by the Witan, and afterwards restored by the concurrent articles of agreement between Harold and Leofric. Harold's policy with his own countrymen stands out very markedly prominent in the annals of the time; it was invariably that of conciliation.

† Saxon Chron., verbatim.

mind to go back and look for him at his own house."

"You will not find him there," said Godrith, "for I know that as soon as he hath finished his conference with the Atheling, he will leave the city; and I shall be at his own favorite manse over the water at sunset, to take orders for repairing the forts and dykes on the Marches. You can tarry awhile and meet us; you know his old lodge in the forest land?"

"Nay, I must be back and at home ere night, for all things go wrong when the master is away. Yet, indeed, my good wife will scold me for not having shaken hands with the handsome Earl."

"Thou shalt not come under that sad infliction," said the good-natured Godrith, who was pleased with the thegn's devotion to Harold, and who, knowing the great weight which Vebba (homely as he seemed) carried in his important county, was politically anxious that the Earl should humor so sturdy a friend,—"Thou shalt not sour they wife's kiss, man. For look you, as you ride back you will pass by a large old house with broken columns at the back."

"I have marked it well," said the thegn, "when I have gone that way, with a heap of queer stones, on a little hillock, which they say the witches or the Britons heaped together."

"The same. When Harold leaves London, I trow well towards that house will his road wend; for there lives Edith the swan's-neck with her awful grandam the Wicca. If thou art there a little after noon, depend on it thou wilt see Harold riding that way."

"Thank thee heartily, friend Godrith," said Vebba, taking his leave, "and forgive my bluntness if I laughed at thy cropped head, for I see thou art as good a Saxon as ere a frankling of Kent—and so the saints keep thee."

Vebba then strode briskly over the bridge, and Godrith, animated by the wine he had drunk, turned gaily on his heel to look amongst the crowded tables for some chance friend with whom to while away an hour or so at the games of hazard then in vogue.

Scarce had he turned, when the two listeners, who, having paid their reckoning, had moved under shade of one of the arcades, dropped into a boat which they had summoned to the margin by a noiseless signal, and were rowed over the water. They preserved a silence which seemed thoughtful and gloomy until they reached the opposite shore; then one of them, pushing back his bonnet, showed the sharp and haughty features of Algar.

"Well, friend of Gryffyth," said he, with a bitter accent, "thou hearest that Earl Harold counts so little on the oaths of thy king, that he intends to fortify the Marches against him; and thou hearest also, that nought save a life, as fragile as the reed which thy feet are trampling, stands between the throne of England and the only Englishman who could ever have humbled my son-in-law to swear oath of service to Edward."

"Shame upon that hour," said the other, whose speech, as well as the gold collar round his neck, and the peculiar fashion of his hair, betokened him to be Welch. "Little did I think that the great son of Llewellyn, whom our bards had set above Roderic Mawr, would ever have acknowledged the sovereignty of the Saxon over the hills of Cymry."

"Tut, Meredydd," answered Algar, "thou knowest well that no Cymrian ever deems himself dishonored by breaking faith with the Saxon; and we shall yet see the lions of Gryffyth scaring the sheepfolds of Hereford."

"So be it," said Meredydd, fiercely. "And Harold shall give to his Atheling the Saxon land, shorn at least of the Cymrian kingdom."

"Meredydd," said Algar, with a seriousness that seemed almost solemn, "no Atheling will live to rule these realms! Thou knowest that I was one of the first to hail the news of his coming—I hastened to Dover to meet him. Methought I saw death writ on his countenance, and I bribed the German leach who attends him to answer my questions; the Atheling knows it not, but he bears within him the seeds of a mortal complaint. Thou wottest well what cause I have to hate Earl Harold; and were I the only man to oppose his way to the throne, he should not ascend it but over my corpse. But when Godrith, his creature, spoke, I felt that he spoke the truth; and, the Atheling dead, on no head but Harold's can fall the crown of Edward."

"Ha!" said the Cymrian chief, gloomily; "thinkest thou so indeed?"

"I think it not; I know it. And for that reason, Meredydd, we must wait not till he wields against us all the royalty of England. As yet, while Edward lives, there is hope. For the King loves to spend wealth on relics and priests, and is slow when the *mancuses* are wanted for fighting men. The King too, poor man! is not so ill pleased at my outbursts as he would fain have it thought; he thinks, by pitting earl against earl, that he himself is the stronger.* While Edward lives, therefore, Harold's arm is half crippled; wherefore, Meredydd, ride thou, with good speed, back to King Gryffyth, and tell him all I have told thee. Tell him that our time to strike the blow and renew the war will be amidst the dismay and confusion that the Atheling's death will occasion. Tell him, that if we can entangle Harold himself in the Welch defiles, it will go hard but what we shall find some arrow or dagger to pierce the heart of the invader. And were Harold but slain—who then would be king in England? The line of Cerdic gone—the house of Godwin lost in Earl Harold (for Tostig is hated in his own domain, Leofwine is too light, and Gurth is too saintly for such ambition)—who then, I say, can be king in England but Algar, the heir of the great Leofric? And I, as King of England, will set all Cymry free, and restore to the realm of Gryffyth the shires of Hereford and Worcester. Ride fast, O Meredydd, and heed well all I have said."

"Dost thou promise and swear, that wert thou king of England, Cymry should be free from all service?"

"Free as air, free as under Arthur and Uther: I swear it. And remember well how Harold addressed the Cymrian chiefs, when he accepted Gryffyth's oaths of service."

"Remember it—ay," cried Meredydd, his face lighting up with intense ire and revenge; "the stern Saxon said, 'Heed well, ye chiefs of Cymry, and thou Gryffyth the King, that if again ye force, by ravage and rapine, by sacrilege and murther, the majesty of England to enter your borders, duty must be done: God grant that your Cymrian lion may leave us in peace—if not, it is mercy to human life that bids us cut the talons and draw the fangs.'"

"Harold, like all calm and mild men, ever says less than he means," returned Algar; "and were Harold king, small pretext would he need for cutting the talons, and drawing the fangs."

"It is well," said Meredydd, with a fierce smile. "I will now go to my men who are lodged yonder; and it is better that thou shouldst not be seen with me."

"Right; so St. David be with you—and forget not a word of my message to Gryffyth my son-in-law."

"Not a word," returned Meredydd, as with a wave of his hand he moved towards an hostelry, to which, as kept by one of their own countrymen, the Welch habitually resorted in the visits to the capital which the various intrigues and dissensions in their unhappy land made frequent.

The chief's train, which consisted of ten men, all of high birth, were not drinking in the tavern—for sorry customers to mine host were the abstemious Welch. Stretched on the grass under the trees of an orchard that backed the hostelry, and utterly indifferent to all the rejoicings that animated the population of Southwark and London, they were listening to a wild song of the old hero-days from one of their number; and round them grazed the rough shagged ponies which they had used for their journey. Meredydd, approaching, gazed round, and seeing no stranger was present, raised his hand to hush the song, and then addressed his countrymen briefly in Welch,—briefly, but with a passion that was evident in his flashing eyes and vehement gestures. The passion was contagious; they all sprang to their feet with a low but fierce cry, and in a few moments they had caught and saddled their diminutive palfreys, while one of the band, who seemed singled out by Meredydd, sallied forth alone from the orchard, and took his way, on foot, to the bridge. He did not tarry there long; at the sight of a single horseman, whom a shout of welcome, on that swarming thoroughfare, proclaimed to be Earl Harold, the Welchman turned, and with a fleet foot regained his companions.

Meanwhile Harold, smilingly, returned the

* Hume.

greetings he received, cleared the bridge, passed the suburbs, and soon gained the wild forest land that lay along the great Kentish road. He rode somewhat slowly, for he was evidently in deep thought; and he had arrived about half-way towards Hilda's house when he heard behind quick pattering sounds, as of small unshod hoofs: he turned, and saw the Welchmen at the distance of some fifty yards. But at that moment there passed, along the road in front, several persons bustling into London to share in the festivities of the day. This seemed to disconcert the Welch in the rear, and, after a few whispered words, they left the high road and entered the forest land. Various groups from time to time continued to pass along the thoroughfare. But still, ever through the glades, Harold caught glimpses of the riders; now distant, now near. Sometimes he heard the snort of their small horses, and saw a fierce eye glaring through the bushes; then, as at the sight or sound of approaching passengers, the riders wheeled, and shot off through the brakes.

The Earl's suspicions were aroused; for (though he knew of no enemy to apprehend, and the extreme severity of the laws against robbers made the high roads much safer in the latter days of the Saxon domination than they were for centuries under that of the subsequent dynasty, when Saxon thegns themselves had turned kings of the greenwood) the various insurrections in Edward's reign had necessarily thrown upon society many turbulent disbanded mercenaries.

Harold was unarmed, save the spear which, even on occasions of state, the Saxon noble rarely laid aside, and the ateghar in his belt; and, seeing now that the road had become deserted, he set spurs to his horse, and was just in sight of the Druid Temple, when a javelin whizzed close by his breast, and another transfixed his horse, which fell head foremost to the ground.

The Earl gained his feet in an instant, and that haste was needed to save his life; for while he rose ten swords flashed around him. The Welchmen had sprung from their palfreys as Harold's horse fell. Fortunately for him, only two of the party bore javelins, (a weapon which the Welch wielded with deadly skill) and, those already wasted, they drew their short swords, which were probably imitated from the Romans, and rushed upon him in simultaneous onset. Versed in all the weapons of the time, with his right hand seeking by his spear to keep off the rush, with the ateghar in his left parrying the strokes aimed at him, the brave Earl transfixed the first assailant, and sore wounded the next; but his tunic was dyed red with three gashes, and his sole chance of life was in the power yet left him to force his way through the ring. Dropping his spear, shifting his ateghar into the right hand, wrapping round his left arm his gonna as a shield, he sprang fiercely on the onslaught, and on the flashing swords. Pierced to the heart fell one of his foes—dashed to the earth another—from the hand of a third (dropping his own ateghar) he wrenched the sword. Loud rose Harold's cry for aid, and swift he strode towards the hillock, turning back, and striking as he turned; and again fell a foe, and again new blood oozed through his own garb. At that moment his cry was echoed by a shriek so sharp and so piercing that it startled the assailants, it arrested the assault; and, ere the unequal strife could be resumed, a woman was in the midst of the fray;—a woman stood dauntless between the Earl and his foes.

"Back! Edith. Oh, God! Back, back!" cried the Earl, recovering all his strength in the sole fear which that strife had yet stricken into his bold heart; and drawing Edith aside with his strong arm, he again confronted the assailants.

"Die!" cried, in the Cymrian tongue, the fiercest of the foes, whose sword had already twice drawn the Earl's blood; "Die, that Cymry may be free!"

Meredydd sprang, with him sprang the survivors of his band; and, by a sudden movement, Edith had thrown herself on Harold's breast, leaving his right arm free, but sheltering his form with her own.

At that sight every sword rested still in air. These Cymrians, hesitating not at the murder of the man whose death seemed to their false virtue a sacrifice due to their hopes of freedom, were still the descendants of Heroes, and the children of noble Song, and their swords were harmless against a woman. The same pause which saved the life of Harold, saved that of Meredydd; for

the Cymrian's lifted sword had left his breast defenceless, and Harold, despite his wrath, and his fears for Edith, touched by that sudden forbearance, forbore himself the blow.

"Why seek ye my life?" said he. "Whom in broad England hath Harold wronged?"

That speech broke the charm, revived the suspense of vengeance. With a sudden aim, Meredydd smote at the head which Edith's embrace left unprotected. The sword shivered on the steel of that which parried the stroke, and the next moment, pierced to the heart, Meredydd fell to the earth, bathed in his gore. Even as he fell, aid was at hand. The ceorls in the Roman house had caught the alarm, and were hurrying down the knoll, with arms snatched in haste, while a loud whoop broke from the forest land hard by; and a troop of horse, headed by Vebba, rushed through the bushes and brakes. Those of the Welch still surviving, no longer animated by their fiery chief, turned on the instant, and fled with that wonderful speed of foot which characterized their active race; calling, as they fled, to their Welch pigmy steeds, which, snorting loud, and lashing out, came at once to the call.

Seizing the nearest at hand, the fugitives sprang to selle, while the animals unchosen, paused by the corpses of their former riders, neighing piteously, and shaking their long manes. And then, after wheeling round and round the coming horsemen, with many a plunge, and lash, and savage cry, they darted after their companions, and disappeared amongst the bushwood. Some of the Kentish men gave chase to the fugitives, but in vain; for the nature of the ground favored flight. Vebba, and the rest, now joined by Hilda's lithsmen, gained the spot where Harold, bleeding fast, yet strove to keep his footing, and, forgetful of his own wounds, was joyfully assuring himself of Edith's safety. Vebba dismounted, and recognizing the Earl, exclaimed:—

"Saints in heaven! are we in time? You bleed—you faint!—Speak, Lord Harold. How fares it?"

"Blood enow yet left here for our merrie England!" said Harold, with a smile. But as he spoke, his head drooped, and he was borne senseless into the house of Hilda.

CHAPTER II.

The Vala met them at the threshold, and testified so little surprise at the sight of the bleeding and unconscious Earl, that Vebba, who had heard strange tales of Hilda's unlawful arts, half suspected that those wild-looking foes, with their uncanny diminutive horses, were imps conjured by her to punish a wooer to her grandchild—who had been perhaps too successful in the wooing. And fears so reasonable were not a little increased when Hilda, after leading the way up the steep ladder to the chamber in which Harold had dreamed his fearful dream, bade them all depart, and leave the wounded man to her care.

"Not so," said Vebba, bluffly. "A life like this is not to be left in the hands of woman, or wicca. I shall go back to the great town, and summon the Earl's own leach. And I beg thee to heed, meanwhile, that every head in this house shall answer for Harold's."

The great Vala, and highborn Hleafdian, little accustomed to be accosted thus, turned round abruptly, with so stern an eye and so imperious a mien, that even the stout Kent man felt abashed. She pointed to the door opening on the ladder, and said, briefly:—

"Depart! Thy lord's life hath been saved already, and by woman. Depart!"

"Depart, and fear not for the Earl, brave and true friend in need," said Edith, looking up from Harold's pale lips, over which she bent; and her sweet voice so touched the good thegn, that, murmuring a blessing on her fair face, he turned and departed.

Hilda then proceeded, with a light and skilful hand, to examine the wounds of her patient. She opened the tunic, and washed away the blood from four gaping orifices on the breast and shoulders. And as she did so, Edith uttered a faint cry, and, falling on her knees, bowed her head over the drooping hand, and kissed it with stifling emotions, of which perhaps grateful joy was the strongest; for over the heart of Harold was punctured, after the fashion of the Saxons, a device—and that device was the knot of betrothal, and in the centre of the knot was graven the word "Edith."

CHAPTER III.

WHETHER owing to Hilda's runes, or to the merely human arts which accompanied them, the Earl's recovery was rapid, though the great loss of blood he had sustained left him awhile weak and exhausted. But, perhaps, he blessed the excuse which detained him still in the house of Hilda, and under the eyes of Edith.

He dismissed the leach sent to him by Vebba, and confided, not without reason, to the Vala's skill. And how happily went his hours beneath the old Roman roof!

It was not without a superstition, more characterized, however, by tenderness than awe, that Harold learned that Edith had been undefinably impressed with a foreboding of danger to her betrothed, and all that morning she had watched his coming from the old legendary hill. Was it not in that watch that his good Fylgia had saved his life?

Indeed, there seemed a strange truth in Hilda's assertions, that in the form of his betrothed, his tutelary spirit lived and guarded. For smooth every step, and bright every day, in his career, since their troth had been plighted. And gradually the sweet superstition had mingled with human passion to hallow and refine it. There was a purity and a depth in the love of these two, which, if not uncommon in women, is most rare in men.

Harold, in sober truth, had learned to look on Edith as on his better angel; and, calming his strong manly heart in the hour of temptation, would have recoiled, as a sacrilege, from aught that could have sullied that image of celestial love. With a noble and sublime patience, of which perhaps only a character so thoroughly English in its habits of self-control and steadfast endurance could have been capable, he saw the months and the years glide away, and still contented himself with hope;—hope, the sole godlike joy that belongs to men!

As the opinion of an age influences even those who affect to despise it, so, perhaps, this holy and unselfish passion was preserved and guarded by that peculiar veneration for purity which formed the characteristic fanaticism of the last days of the Anglo-Saxons,—when still, as Aldhelm had previously sung in Latin less barbarous than perhaps any priest in the reign of Edward could command,—

> "Virginitas castam servans sine crimine carnem
> Cætera virtutem vincit-præconia laudi—
> Spiritus altithroni templum sibi vindicat almus;" *

when, amidst a great dissoluteness of manners, alike common to Church and laity, the opposite virtues were, as is invariable in such epochs of society, carried by the few purer natures into heroic extremes. "And as gold, the adorner of the world, springs from the sordid bosom of earth, so chastity, the image of gold, rose bright and unsullied from the clay of human desire." †

And Edith, though yet in the tenderest flush of beautiful youth, had, under the influence of that sanctifying and scarce earthly affection, perfected her full nature as woman. She had learned so to live in Harold's life, that—less, it seemed, by study than intuition—a knowledge graver than that which belonged to her sex and her time, seemed to fall upon her soul—fall as the sunlight falls on the blossoms, expanding their petals, and brightening the glory of their hues.

Hitherto, living under the shade of Hilda's dreary creed, Edith, as we have seen, had been rather Christian by name and instinct than acquainted with the doctrine of the Gospel, or penterated by its faith. But the soul of Harold lifted her own out of the Valley of the Shadow up to the Heavenly Hill. For the character of their love was so pre-eminently Christian, so, by the circumstances that surrounded it—so by hope and self-denial, elevated out of the empire, not only of the senses, but even of that sentiment which springs from them, and which made the sole refined and poetic element of the heathen's love, that but for Christianity it would have withered and died. It required all the aliment of prayer; it

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* "The chaste who blameless keep unsullied fame,
Transcend all other worth, all other praise.
The Spirit, high enthroned, has made their hearts
His sacred temple."

SHARON TURNER'S *Translation of Aldhelm*, vol. iii. p. 366. It is curious to see how, even in Latin, the poet preserves the *alliterations* that characterized the Saxon muse.

† Slightly altered from Aldhelm.

needed that patient endurance which comes from the soul's consciousness of immortality; it could not have resisted earth, but from the forts and armies it won from heaven. Thus from Harold might Edith be said to have taken her very soul. And with the soul, and through the soul, woke the mind from the mists of childhood.

In the intense desire to be worthy the love of the foremost man of her land; to be the companion of his mind, as well as the mistress of his heart, she had acquired, she knew not how, strange stores of thought, and intelligence, and pure, gentle wisdom. In opening to her confidence his own high aims and projects, he himself was scarcely conscious how often he confined but to consult—how often and how insensibly she colored his reflections and shaped his designs. Whatever was highest and purest, *that*, Edith ever, as by instinct, beheld as the wisest. She grew to him like a second conscience, diviner than his own. Each, therefore, reflected virtue on the other, as planet illumines planet.

All these years of probation, then, which might have soured a love less holy, changed into weariness a love less intense, had only served to wed them more intimately soul to soul; and in that spotless union what happiness there was! what rapture in word and glance, and the slight, restrained caress of innocence, beyond all the transports love only human can bestow!

CHAPTER IV.

It was a bright still summer noon, when Harold sate with Edith amidst the columns of the Druid temple, and in the shade which those vast and mournful relics of a faith departed cast along the sward. And there, conversing over the past, and planning the future, they had sate long, when Hilda approached from the house, and entering the circle, leant her arm upon the altar of the war-god, and gazing on Harold with a calm triumph in her aspect, said,—

"Did I not smile, son of Godwin, when, with thy short-sighted wisdom, thou didst think to guard thy land and secure thy love, by urging the monk-king to send over the seas for the Atheling? Did I not tell thee, 'Thou dost right, for in obeying thy judgment thou art but the instrument of fate; and the coming of the Atheling shall speed thee nearer to the ends of thy life, but not from the Atheling shalt thou take the crown of thy love, and not by the Atheling shall the throne of Athelstan be filled?"

"Alas," said Harold, rising in agitation, "let me not hear of mischance to that noble prince. He seemed sick and feeble when I parted from him; but joy is a great restorer, and the air of the native land gives quick health to the exile."

"Hark!" said Hilda, "you hear the passing bell for the soul of the son of Ironsides!"

The mournful knell, as she spoke, came dull from the roofs of the city afar, borne to their ears by the exceeding stillness of the atmosphere. Edith crossed herself, and murmured a prayer according to the custom of the age; then raising her eyes to Harold, she murmured, as she clasped her hands,—

"Be not saddened, Harold; hope still."

"Hope!" repeated Hilda, rising proudly from her recumbent position, "Hope! in that knell from St. Paul's, dull indeed is thine ear, O Harold, if thou hearest not the joy-bells that inaugurate a future king!"

The Earl started; his eyes shot fire; his breast heaved.

"Leave us, Edith," said Hilda, in a low voice; and after watching her grandchild's slow reluctant steps descend the knoll, she turned to Harold, and leading him towards the gravestone of the Saxon chief, said,—

"Rememberest thou the spectre that rose from this mound?—rememberest thou the dream that followed it?"

"The spectre, or deceit of mine eye, I remember well," answered the Earl; "the dream, not;—or only in confused and jarring fragments."

"I told thee then, that I could not unriddle the dream by the light of the moment; and that the dead who slept below never appeared to men, save for some portent of doom to the house of Cerdic. The portent is fulfilled; the Heir of Cerdic is no more. To whom appeared the great Scin-læca, but to him who shall lead a new race of Kings to the Saxon throne!"

Harold breathed hard, and the color mounted bright and glowing to his cheek and brow.

"I cannot gainsay thee, Vala. Unless, despite all conjecture, Edward should be spared to earth till the Atheling's infant son acquires the age when bearded men will acknowledge a chief,* I look round in England for the coming king, and all England reflects but mine own image."

His head rose erect as he spoke, and already the brow seemed august, as if circled by the diadem of the Basileus.

"And if it be so," he added, "I accept that solemn trust, and England shall grow greater in my greatness."

"The flame breaks at last from the smouldering fuel," cried the Vala, "and the hour I so long foretold to thee hath come!"

Harold answered not, for high and kindling emotions deafened him to all but the voice of a grand ambition, and the awakening joy of a noble heart.

"And then—and then," he exclaimed, "I shall need no mediator between nature and monkcraft;—then, O Edith, the life thou hast saved will indeed be thine!" He paused, and it was a sign of the change that an ambition long repressed, but now rushing into the vent legitimately open to it, had already begun to work in the character hitherto so self-reliant, when he said in a low voice, "But that dream which hath so long lain locked, not lost, in my mind; that dream of which I recall only vague remembrances of danger yet defiance, trouble yet triumph,—canst thou unriddle it, O Vala, into auguries of success?"

"Harold," answered Hilda, "thou didst hear at the close of thy dream, the music of the hymns that are chaunted at the crowning of a king,—and a crowned king shalt thou be; yet fearful foes shall assail thee—foreshown in the shapes of the lion and raven, that came in menace over the blood-red sea. The two stars in the heaven betoken that the day of thy birth was also the birth-day of a foe, whose star is fatal to thine; and they warn thee against a battle-field, fought on the day when those stars shall meet. Farther than this the mystery of thy dream escapes from my lore;—wouldst thou learn thyself, from the phantom that sent the dream;—stand by my side at the grave of the Saxon hero, and I will summon the Scin-læca to counsel the living. For what to the Vala the dead may deny, the soul of the brave on the brave may bestow!"

Harold listened with a serious and musing attention, which his pride or his reason had never before accorded to the warnings of Hilda. But his sense was not yet fascinated by the voice of the charmer, and he answered with his wonted smile, so sweet yet so haughty,—

"A hand outstretched to a crown should be armed for the foe; and the eye that would guard the living should not be dimmed by the vapors that encircle the dead."

CHAPTER V.

But from that date changes, slight, yet noticeable and important, were at work both in the conduct and character of the great Earl.

Hitherto he had advanced on his career without calculation; and nature, not policy, had achieved his power. But henceforth he began thoughtfully to cement the foundations of his House, to extend the area, to strengthen the props. Policy now mingled with the justice that had made him esteemed, and the generosity that had won him love. Before, though by temper conciliatory, yet, through honesty, indifferent to the enmities he provoked, in his adherence to what his conscience approved, he now laid himself out to

* It is impossible to form any just view of the state of parties, and the position of Harold in the later portions of this work, unless the reader will bear constantly in mind the fact that, from the earliest period, minors were set aside as a matter of course, by the Saxon customs. Henry observes, that, in the whole history of the Heptarchy, there is but one example of a minority, and that a short and unfortunate one; so, in the later times, the great Alfred takes the throne, to the exclusion of the infant son of his elder brother. Only under very peculiar circumstances, backed, as in the case of Edmund Ironsides, by precocious talents and manhood on the part of the minor, were there exceptions to the general laws of succession. The same rule obtained with the earldoms; the fame, power, and popularity of Siward could not transmit his Northumbrian earldom to his infant son Waltheof, so gloomily renowned in a subsequent reign.

propitiate all ancient feuds, soothe all jealousies, and convert foes into friends. He opened constant and friendly communication with his uncle Sweyn, King of Denmark; he availed himself sedulously of all the influence over the Anglo-Danes which his mother's birth made so facile.

He strove also, and wisely, to conciliate the animosities which the church had cherished against Godwin's house; he concealed his disdain of the monks and monk-ridden; he showed himself the Church's patron and friend; he endowed largely the convents, and especially one at Waltham, which had fallen into decay, though favorably known for the piety of its brotherhood. But if in this he played a part not natural to his opinions, Harold could not, even in simulation, administer to evil. The monasteries he favored were those distinguished for purity of life, for benevolence to the poor, for bold denunciation of the excesses of the great. He had not, like the Norman, the grand design of creating in the priesthood a college of learning, a school of arts; such notions were unfamiliar in homely, unlettered England. And Harold, though for his time and his land no mean scholar, would have recoiled from favoring a learning always made subservient to Rome; always at once haughty and scheming, and aspiring to complete domination over both the souls of men and the thrones of kings. But his aim was, out of the elements he found in the natural kindliness existing between Saxon priest and Saxon flock, to rear a modest, virtuous, homely clergy, not above tender sympathy with an ignorant population. He selected as examples for his monastery at Waltham, two low-born humble brothers, Osgood and Ailred; the one known for the courage with which he had gone through the land, preaching to abbot and thegn the emancipation of the theowes, as the most meritorious act the safety of the soul could impose; the other, who, originally a clerk, had, according to the common custom of the Saxon clergy, contracted the bonds of marriage, and with some eloquence had vindicated that custom against the canons of Rome, and refused the offer of large endowments and thegn's rank to put away his wife. But on the death of that spouse, he had adopted the cowl, and while still persisting in the lawfulness of marriage to the unmonastic clerks, had become famous for denouncing the open concubinage which desecrated the holy office, and violated the solemn vows, of many a proud prelate and abbot.

To these two men (both of whom refused the abbacy of Waltham) Harold committed the charge of selecting the new brotherhood established there. And the monks of Waltham were honored as saints throughout the neighboring district, and cited as examples to all the Church.

But though in themselves the new politic arts of Harold seemed blameless enough, *arts* they were, and as such they corrupted the genuine simplicity of his earlier nature. He had conceived for the first time an ambition apart from that of service to his country. It was no longer only to serve the land, it was to serve it as its ruler, that animated his heart and colored his thoughts. Expediencies began to dim to his conscience the healthful loveliness of Truth. And now, too, gradually, that empire which Hilda had gained over his brother Sweyn, began to sway this man, heretofore so strong in his sturdy sense. The future became to him a dazzling mystery, into which his conjectures plunged themselves more and more. He had not yet stood in the Runic circle and invoked the dead; but the spells were around his heart, and in his own soul had grown up the familiar demon.

Still Edith reigned alone, if not in his thoughts at least in his affections; and perhaps it was the hope of conquering all obstacles to his marriage that mainly induced him to propitiate the Church, through whose agency the object he sought must be attained; and still that hope gave the brightest lustre to the distant crown. But he who admits Ambition to the companionship of Love, admits a giant that outstrides the gentler footsteps of its comrade.

Harold's brow lost its benign calm. He became thoughtful and abstracted. He consulted Edith less, Hilda more. Edith seemed to him now not wise enough to counsel. The smile of his Fylgia, like the light of the star upon a stream, lit the surface, but could not pierce to the deep.

Meanwhile, however, the policy of Harold throve and prospered. He had already arrived at that height, that the least effort to make power popular redoubled its extent. Gradually all voices swelled the chorus in his praise; gradually men became familiar to the question, "If Edward dies before Edgar, the grandson of Ironsides, is of age to succeed, where can we find a king like Harold?"

In the midst of this quiet but deepening sunshine of his fate, there burst a storm, which seemed destined either to darken his day or to disperse every cloud from the horizon. Algar, the only possible rival to his power—the only opponent no arts could soften—Algar, whose hereditary name endeared him to the Saxon laity, whose father's most powerful legacy was the love of the Saxon Church, whose martial and turbulent spirit had only the more elevated him in the esteem of the warlike Danes in East Anglia (the earldom in which he had succeeded Harold), by his father's death, lord of the great principality of Mercia—availed himself of that new power to break out again into rebellion. Again he was outlawed, again he leagued with the fiery Gryffyth. All Wales was in revolt; the Marches were invaded and laid waste. Rolf, the feeble Earl of Hereford, died at this critical juncture, and the Normans and hirelings under him mutinied against other leaders; a fleet of vikings from Norway ravaged the western coasts, and sailing up the Menai, joined the ships of Gryffyth, and the whole empire seemed menaced with dissolution, when Edward issued his Herr-bann, and Harold at the head of the royal armies marched on the foe.

Dread and dangerous were those defiles of Wales; amidst them had been foiled or slaughtered all the warriors under Rolf the Norman; no Saxon armies had won laurels in the Cymrian's own mountain home within the memory of man; nor had any Saxon ships borne the palm from the terrible vikings of Norway. Fail, Harold, and farewell the crown!—succeed, and thou hast on thy side the *ultimam rationem regum* (the last argument of kings), the heart of the army over which thou art chief.

CHAPTER VI.

It was one day in the height of summer that two horsemen rode slowly, and conversing with each other in friendly wise, notwithstanding an evident difference of rank and of nation, through the lovely country which formed the Marches of Wales. The younger of these men was unmistakeably a Norman; his cap only partially covered the head, which was shaven from the crown to the nape of the neck,* while in front the hair, closely cropped, curled short and thick round a haughty but intelligent brow. His dress fitted close to his shape, and was worn without mantle; his leggings were curiously crossed in the fashion of a tartan, and on his heels were spurs of gold. He was wholly unarmed; but behind him and his companion, at a little distance, his war horse, completely caparisoned, was led by a single squire, mounted on a good Norman steed; while six Saxon theowes, themselves on foot, conducted three sumpter-mules, somewhat heavily laden, not only with the armor of the Norman knight, but panniers containing rich robes, wines and provender. At a few paces farther behind, marched a troop, light-armed, in tough hides, curiously tanned, with axes swung over their shoulders, and bows in their hands.

The companion of the knight was as evidently a Saxon, as the knight was unequivocally a Norman. His square, short features, contrasting the oval visage and aquiline profile of his close-shaven comrade, were half concealed beneath a bushy beard and immense moustache. His tunic, also, was of hide, and, tightened at the waist, fell loose to his knee; while a kind of cloak, fastened to the right shoulder by a large round button or brooch, flowed behind and in front, but left both arms free. His cap differed in shape from the Norman's, being round and full at the sides, somewhat in shape like a turban. His bare, brawny throat was curiously punctured with sundry devices, and a verse from the Psalms.

His countenance, though without the high and haughty brow, and the acute, observant eye of his comrade, had a pride and

* Bayeux Tapestry.

intelligence of its own—a pride somewhat sullen, and an intelligence somewhat slow.

"My good friend, Sexwolf," quoth the Norman in very tolerable Saxon, "I pray you not so to misesteem us. After all, we Normans are of your own race: our fathers spoke the same language as yours."

"That may be," said the Saxon, bluntly, "and so did the Danes, with little difference, when they burned our houses and cut our throats."

"Old tales, those," replied the knight, "and I thank thee for the comparison; for the Danes, thou seest, are now settled amongst ye, peaceful subjects and quiet men, and in a few generations it will be hard to guess who comes from Saxon, who from Dane."

"We waste time, talking such matters," returned the Saxon, feeling himself instinctively no match in argument for his lettered companion; and seeing, with his native strong sense, that some ulterior object, though he guessed not what, lay hid in the conciliatory language of his companion; "nor do I believe, Master Mallet or Gravel —forgive me if I miss of the right forms to address you—that Norman will ever love Saxon, or Saxon Norman; so let us cut our words short. There stands the convent, at which you would like to rest and refresh yourself."

The Saxon pointed to a low, clumsy building of timber, forlorn and decayed, close by a rank marsh, over which swarmed gnats, and all foul animalcules.

Mallet de Graville, for it was he, shrugged his shoulders, and said, with an air of pity and contempt,—

"I would, friend Sexwolf, that thou couldst but see the houses we build to God and his saints in our Normandy; fabrics of stately stone, on the fairest sites. Our Countess Matilda hath a notable taste for the masonry; and our workmen are the brethren of Lombardy, who know all the mysteries thereof."

"I pray thee, Dan-Norman," cried the Saxon, "not to put such ideas into the soft head of King Edward. We pay enow for the Church, though built but of timber; saints help us indeed, if it were builded of stone!"

The Norman crossed himself, as if he had heard some signal impiety, and then said,

"Thou lovest not Mother Church, worthy Sexwolf!"

"I was brought up," replied the sturdy Saxon, "to work and sweat hard, and I love not the lazy who devour my substance, and say, 'the saints gave it them.' Knowest thou not, Master Mallet, that one-third of all the lands of England is in the hands of the priests?"

"Hem!" said the acute Norman, who, with all his devotion, could stoop to wring worldly advantage from each admission of his comrade; "then in this merrie England of thine, thou hast still thy grievances and cause of complaint?"

"Yea, indeed, and I trow it," quoth the Saxon, even in that day a grumbler; "but I take it, the main difference between thee and me is, that I can say what mislikes me out like a man; and it would fare ill with thy limbs or thy life if thou wert as frank in the grim land of thy *heretogh*."

"Now, *Notre Dame* stop thy prating," said the Norman, in high disdain, while his brow frowned and his eye sparkled. "Strong judge and great captain as is William the Norman, his barons and knights hold their heads high in his presence, and not a grievance weighs on the heart that we give not out with the lip."

"So have I heard," said the Saxon, chuckling; "I have heard, indeed, that ye thegns, or great men, are free enow, and plain-spoken. But what of the commons—the sixhændmen, and the ceorls, master Norman? Dare they speak as we speak of king and of law, of thegn and of captain?"

The Norman wisely curbed the scornful "No, indeed," that rushed to his lips, and said, all sweet and debonnair,—

"Each land hath his customs, dear Sexwolf; and if the Norman were king of England, he would take the laws as he finds them, and the ceorls would be as safe with William as Edward."

"The Norman king of England!" cried the Saxon, reddening to the tips of his great ears, "what dost thou babble of, stranger? The Norman!—How could that ever be?"

"Nay, I did but suggest—but suppose such a case," replied the knight, still smoth-

ering his wrath. "And why thinkest thou the conceit so outrageous? Thy king is childless; William is his next of kin, and dear to him as a brother; and if Edward did leave him the throne—"

"The throne is for no man to leave," almost roared the Saxon. "Thinkest thou the people of England are like cattle and sheep, and chattels and theowes, to be left by will, as man fancies? The king's wish has its weight, no doubt, but the Witan hath its yea or its nay, and the Witan and Commons are seldom at issue thereon. Thy duke king of England! Marry! Ha! ha!"

"Brute!" muttered the knight to himself; then adding aloud, with his old tone of irony (now much habitually subdued by years and discretion), "Why takest thou so the part of the ceorls? thou a captain, and well nigh a thegn!"

"I was born a ceorl, and my father before me," returned Sexwolf, "and I feel with my class; though my grandson may rank with the thegns, and, for aught I know, with the earls."

The Sire de Graville involuntarily drew off from the Saxon's side, as if made suddenly aware that he had grossly demeaned himself in such unwitting familiarity with a ceorl, and a ceorl's son; and he said, with a much more careless accent and lofty port than before,—

"Good man, thou wert a ceorl, and now thou leadest Earl Harold's men to the war! How is this? I do not quite comprehend it."

"How shouldst thou, poor Norman?" replied the Saxon compassionately. "The tale is soon told. Know that when Harold our Earl was banished, and his lands taken, we his ceorls helped with his sixhændman, Clapa, to purchase his land, nigh by London, and the house wherein thou didst find me, of a stranger, thy countryman, to whom they were lawlessly given. And we tilled the land, we tended the herds, and we kept the house till the Earl came back."

"Ye had moneys then, moneys of your own, ye ceorls!" said the Norman avariciously.

"How else could we buy our freedom? Every ceorl hath some hours to himself to employ to his profit, and can lay by for his own ends. These savings we gave up for our Earl, and when the Earl came back, he gave the sixhændman hydes of land enow to make him a thegn; and he gave the ceorls who had holpen Clapa, their freedom and broad shares of his boc-land, and most of them now hold their own ploughs and feed their own herds. But I loved the Earl (having no wife) better than swine and glebe, and I prayed him to let me serve him in arms. And so I have risen, as with us ceorls can rise."

"I am answered," said Mallet de Graville thoughtfully and still somewhat perplexed. "But these theowes, (they are slaves,) never rise. It cannot matter to them whether shaven Norman or bearded Saxon sit on the throne?"

"Thou art right there," answered the Saxon; "it matters as little to them as it doth to thy thieves and felons, for many of them are felons and thieves, or the children of such; and most of those who are not, it is said, are not Saxons, but the barbarous folks whom the Saxons subdued. No, wretched things, and scarce men, they care naught for the land. Howbeit, even they are not without hope, for the Church takes their part; and that, at least, I for one, think Churchworthy," added the Saxon with a softened eye. "And every abbot is bound to set free three theowes on his lands, and few who own theowes die without freeing some by their will; so that the sons of theowes may be thegns, and thegns some of them are at this day."

"Marvels!" cried the Norman. "But surely they bear a stain and stigma, and their fellow-thegns flout them?"

"Not a whit—why so? land is land, money money. Little, I trow, care we what a man's father may have been, if the man himself hath his ten hides or more of good boc-land."

"Ye value land and the moneys," said the Norman, "so do we, but we value more name and birth."

"Ye are still in your leading-strings, Norman," replied the Saxon, waxing good-humored in his contempt. "We have an old saying and a wise one, 'All come from Adam except Tib the ploughman: but when Tib grows rich all call him dear brother.'"

"With such pestilent notions," quoth the Sire de Graville, no longer keeping temper, "I do not wonder that our fathers of Norway and Daneland beat ye so easily. The love for things ancient—creed, lineage, and name, is better steel against the stranger, than your smiths ever welded."

Therewith, and not waiting for Sexwolf's reply, he clapped spurs to his palfrey, and soon entered the court-yard of the convent.

A monk of the order of St. Benedict, then most in favor,* ushered the noble visitor into the cell of the Abbot; who, after gazing at him a moment in wonder and delight, clasped him to his breast and kissed him heartily on brow and cheek.

"Ah, Guillaume," he exclaimed in the Norman tongue, "this is indeed a grace for which to sing *Jubilate*. Thou canst not guess how welcome is the face of a countryman in this horrible land of ill-cooking and exile."

"Talking of grace, my dear father, and food," said De Graville, loosening the cincture of the tight vest which gave him the shape of a wasp—for even at that early period, small waists were in vogue with the warlike fops of the French Continent—"talking of grace, the sooner thou say'st it over some friendly refection, the more will the Latin sound unctuous and musical. I have journeyed since day-break, and am now hungered and faint."

"Alack, alack!" cried the Abbot, plaintively, "thou knowest little, my son, what hardships we endure in these parts, how larded our larders, and how nefarious our fare. The flesh of swide salted—"

"The flesh of Beelzebub," cried Mallet de Graville aghast. "But comfort thee, I have stores on my sumpter-mules—*poulardes* and fishes, and other not despicable comestibles, and a few flasks of wine, not pressed, laud the saints! from the vines of this country: wherefore, wilt thou see to it, and instruct thy cooks how to season the cheer?"

"No cooks have I to trust to," replied the Abbot; "of cooking know they here as much as of Latin; natheless, I will go and do my best with the stew-pans. Meanwhile, thou wilt at least have rest and the bath. For the Saxons, even in their convents, are a clean race, and learned the bath from the Dane."

"That I have noted," said the knight, "for even at the smallest house at which I have lodged in my way from London, the host hath courteously offered me the bath, and the hostess linen curious and fragrant; and to say truth, the poor people are hospitable and kind, despite their uncouth hate of the foreigner; nor is their meat to be despised, plentiful and succulent; but *pardex*, as thou sayest, little helped by the art of dressing. Wherefore, my father, I will while the time till the *poulardes* be roasted, and the fish broiled or stewed, by the ablutions thou profferest me. I shall tarry with thee some hours, for I have much to learn."

The Abbot then led the Sire de Graville by the hand to the cell of honor and guestship, and having seen that the bath prepared was of warmth sufficient, for both Norman and Saxon (hardy men as they seem to us from afar) so shuddered at the touch of cold water, that a bath of natural temperature (as well as a hard bed) was sometimes imposed as a penance,—the good father went his way, to examine the sumpter-mules, and admonish the much suffering and bewildered lay-brother who officiated as cook,—and who, speaking neither Norman nor Latin, scarce made out one word in ten of his superior's elaborate exhortations.

Mallet's squire, with a change of raiment, and goodly coffers of soaps, unguents, and odors, took his way to the knight, for a Norman of birth was accustomed to much personal attendance, and had all respect for the body; and it was nearly an hour before, in a long gown of fur, re-shaven, dainty, and decked, the Sire de Graville bowed, and sighed, and prayed before the refection set out in the Abbot's cell.

The two Normans, despite the sharp appetite of the layman, ate with great gravity and decorum, drawing forth the morsels served to them on spits with silent examination; seldom more than tasting, with looks of patient dissatisfaction, each of the comestibles; sipping rather than drinking, nibbling rather than devouring, washing their fingers in rose water with nice care at the close, and waving them afterwards gracefully in the air,

* Indeed, apparently the only monastic order in England.

to allow the moisture somewhat to exhale before they wiped off the lingering dews with their napkins. Then they exchanged looks and sighed in concert, as if recalling the polished manners of Normandy, still retained in that desolate exile. And their temperate meal thus concluded, dishes, wines, and attendants vanished, and their talk commenced.

"How camest thou in England?" asked the Abbot abruptly.

"Sauf your reverence," answered De Graville, "not wholly for reasons different from those that bring thee hither. When, after the death of that truculent and orgulous Godwin, King Edward entreated Harold to let him have back some of his dear Norman favorites, thou, then little pleased with the plain fare and sharp discipline of the convent of Bec, didst pray Bishop William of London to accompany such train as Harold, moved by his poor king's supplication, was pleased to permit. The Bishop consented, and thou wert enabled to change monk's cowl for abbot's mitre. In a word, ambition brought thee to England, and ambition brings me hither."

"Hem! and how? Mayst thou thrive better than I in this swine-style!"

"You remember," renewed De Graville, "that Lanfranc, the Lombard, was pleased to take interest in my fortunes, then not the most flourishing, and after his return from Rome, with the Pope's dispensation for Count William's marriage with his cousin, he became William's most trusted adviser. Both William and Lanfranc were desirous to set an example of learning to our Latinless nobles, and therefore my scholarship found grace in their eyes. In brief—since then I have prospered and thriven. I have fair lands by the Seine, free from clutch of merchant and Jew. I have founded a convent, and slain some hundreds of Breton marauders. Need I say that I am in high favor? Now it so chanced that a cousin of mine, Hugo de Magnaville, a brave lance and franc-rider, chanced to murder his brother in a little domestic affray, and, being of conscience tender and nice, the deed preyed on him, and he gave his lands to Odo of Bayeux, and set off to Jerusalem. There, having prayed at the Tomb" (the knight crossed himself), "he felt at once miraculously cheered and relieved; but, journeying back, mishaps befell him. He was made slave by some infidel, to one of whose wives he sought to be gallant, *par amours*, and only escaped at last by setting fire to paynim and prison. Now, by the aid of the Virgin, he has got back to Rouen, and holds his own land again in fief from proud Odo, as a knight of the bishop's. It so happened that, passing homeward through Lycia, before these misfortunes befell him, he made friends with a fellow-pilgrim who had just returned, like himself, from the Sepulchre, but not lightened, like him, of the load of his crime. This poor palmer lay broken-hearted and dying in the hut of an eremite, where my cousin took shelter; and, learning that Hugo was on his way to Normandy, he made himself known as Sweyn, the once fair and proud Earl of England, eldest son to old Godwin, and father to Haco, whom our Count still holds as a hostage. He besought Hugo to intercede with the Count for Haco's speedy release and return, if King Edward assented thereto; and charged my consin, moreover, with a letter to Harold, his brother, which Hugo undertook to send over. By good luck, it so chanced that, through all his sore trials, cousin Hugo kept safe round his neck a leaden effigy of the Virgin. The infidels disdained to rob him of lead, little dreaming the worth which the sanctity gave to the metal. To the back of the image Hugo fastened the letter, and so, though somewhat tattered and damaged, he had it still with him on arriving in Rouen.

"Knowing, then, my grace with the Count, and not, despite absolution and pilgrimage, much wishing to trust himself in the presence of William, who thinks gravely of fratricide, he prayed me to deliver the message, and ask leave to send to England the letter."

"It is a long tale," quoth the Abbot.

"Patience, my father! I am nearly at the end. Nothing more in season could chance for my fortunes. Know that William has been long moody and anxious as to matters in England. The secret accounts he receives from the Bishop of London make him see that Edward's heart is much alienated from him, especially since the Count has had

daughters and sons; for, as thou knowest, William and Edward both took vows of chastity in youth,* and William got absolved from his, while Edward hath kept firm to the plight. Not long ere my cousin came back, William had heard that Edward had acknowledged his kinsman as natural heir to his throne. Grieved and troubled at this, William had said in my hearing, 'Would that amidst yon statues of steel, there were some cool head and wise tongue I could trust with my interests in England! and would that I could devise fitting plea and excuse for an envoy to Harold the Earl!' Much had I mused over these words, and a light-hearted man was Mallet de Graville when, with Sweyn's letter in hand, he went to Lanfranc the Abbot and said, 'Patron and father! thou knowest that I, almost alone of the Norman knights, have studied the Saxon language. And if the Duke wants messenger and plea, here stands the messenger, and in this hand is the plea.' Then I told my tale. Lanfranc went at once to Duke William. By this time, news of the Atheling's death had arrived, and things looked more bright to my liege. Duke William was pleased to summon me straightway, and give me his instructions. So over the sea I came alone, save a single squire, reached London, learned the King and his court were at Winchester (but with them I had little to do), and that Harold the Earl was at the head of his forces in Wales against Gryffyth the Lion King. The Earl had sent in haste for a picked and chosen band of his own retainers, on his demesnes near the city. These I joined, and learning thy name at the monastery at Gloucester, I stopped here to tell thee my news and hear thine."

"Dear brother," said the Abbot, looking enviously on the knight, "would that, like thee, instead of entering the Church, I had taken up arms! Alike once was our lot, well born and penniless. Ah me!—Thou art now as the swan on the river, and I as the shell on the rock."

"But," quoth the knight, "though the canons, it is true, forbid monks to knock people on the head, except in self-preservation, thou knowest well that, even in Normandy (which, I take it, is the sacred college of all priestly lore, on this side the Alps), those canons are deemed too rigorous for practice: and, at all events, it is not forbidden thee to look on the pastime with sword or mace by thy side in case of need. Wherefore, remembering thee in times past, I little counted on finding thee—like a slug in thy cell! No; but with mail on thy back, the canons clean forgotten, and helping stout Harold to sliver and brain these turbulent Welchmen."

"Ah me! ah me! No such good fortune!" sighed the tall Abbot. "Little, despite thy former sojourn in London, and thy lore of their tongue, knowest thou of these unmannerly Saxons. Rarely indeed do abbot and prelate ride to the battle;* and were it not for a huge Danish monk, who took refuge here to escape mutilation for robbery, and who mistakes the Virgin for a Valkyr, and St. Peter for Thor,—were it not, I say, that we now and then have a bout at sword-play together, my arm would be quite out of practice."

"Cheer thee, old friend," said the knight, pityingly, "better times may come yet. Meanwhile, now to affairs. For all I hear strengthens all William has heard, that Harold the Earl is the first man in England. Is it not so?"

"Truly, and without dispute."

"Is he married, or celibate? For that is a question which even his own men seem to answer equivocally."

"Why, all the wandering minstrels have songs, I am told by those who comprehend this poor barbarous tongue, of the beauty of *Editha pulchra*, to whom it is said the Earl is betrothed, or it may be worse. But he is certainly not married, for the dame is akin to him within the degrees of the Church."

"Hem, not married! that is well; and this Algar, or Elgar, he is not now with the Welch, I hear."

"No; sore ill at Chester with wounds and

* See note to Robert of Gloucester, vol. ii. p. 372.

* The Saxon priests were strictly forbidden to bear arms.—SPELM. *Concil.* p. 238.

It is mentioned in the English Chronicles, as a very extraordinary circumstance, that a bishop of Hereford, who had been Harold's chaplain, did actually take sword and shield against the Welch. Unluckily, this valiant prelate was slain so soon, that it was no encouraging example.

much chafing, for he hath sense to see that his cause is lost. The Norwegian fleet have been scattered over the seas by the Earl's ships, like birds in a storm. The rebel Saxons who joined Gryffyth under Algar have been so beaten, that those who survive have deserted their chief, and Gryffyth himself is penned up in his last defiles, and connot much longer resist the stout foe, who, by valorous St. Michael, is truly a great captain. As soon as Gryffyth is subdued, Algar will be crushed in his retreat, like a bloated spider in his web; and then England will have rest, unless our liege, as thou hintest, set her to work again."

The Norman knight mused a few moments, before he said,—

"I understand, then, that there is no man in the land who is peer to Harold:—not, I suppose, Tostig his brother?"

"Not Tostig, surely, whom nought but Harold's repute keeps a day in his earldom. But of late—for he is brave and skilful in war—he hath done much to command the respect, though he cannot win back the love, of his fierce Northumbrians, for he hath holpen the Earl gallantly in this invasion of Wales, both by sea and by land. But Tostig shines only from his brother's light; and if Gurth were more ambitious, Gurth alone could be Harold's rival."

The Norman, much satisfied with the information thus gleaned from the Abbot, who, despite his ignorance of the Saxon tongue, was, like all his countrymen, acute and curious, now rose to depart. The abbot, detaining him a few moments, and looking at him wistfully, said in a low voice,

"What thinkest thou are Count William's chances of England?"

"Good, if he have recourse to stratagem; sure, if he can win Harold."

"Yet, take my word, the English love not the Normans, and will fight stiffly."

"That I believe. But if fighting must be, I see that it will be the fight of a single battle, for there is neither fortress nor mountain to admit of long warfare. And look you, my friend, everything here is *worn out!* The royal line is extinct with Edward, save in a child, whom I hear no man name as a successor; the old nobility are gone, there is no reverence for old names; the church is as decrepit in the spirit as thy lath monastery is decayed in its timbers; the martial spirit of the Saxon is half rotted away in the subjugation to a clergy, not brave and learned, but timid and ignorant; the desire for money eats up all manhood; the people have been accustomed to foreign monarchs under the Danes; and William, once victor, would have but to promise to retain the old laws and liberties, to establish himself as firmly as Canute. The Anglo-Danes might trouble him somewhat, but rebellion would become a weapon in the hands of a schemer like William. He would bristle all the land with castles and forts, and hold it as a camp. My poor friend, we shall live yet to enchange gratulations,—thou prelate of some fair English see, and I baron of broad English lands."

"I think thou art right," said the tall Abbot cheerily, "and marry, when the day comes, I will at least fight for the Duke. Yea—thou art right," he continued, looking round the dilapidated walls of the cell; "all here is worn out, and nought can restore the realm, save the Norman William, or—"

"Or who?"

"Or the Saxon Harold. But thou goest to see him—judge for thyself."

"I will do so, and heedfully," said the Sire de Graville; and embracing his friend, he renewed his journey.

CHAPTER VII.

Messire Mallet de Graville possessed in perfection that cunning astuteness which characterized the Normans, as it did all the old pirate races of the Baltic; and if, O reader, thou, peradventure, shouldst ever in this remote day have dealings with the tall men of Ebor or Yorkshire, there wilt thou yet find the old Dane-father's wit—it may be to thy cost—more especially if treating for those animals which the ancestor ate, and which the sons, without eating, still manage to fatten on.

But though the crafty knight did his best, during his progress from London into Wales, to extract from Sexwolf all such particulars respecting Harold and his brethren as he

had reasons for wishing to learn, he found the stubborn sagacity or caution of the Saxon more than a match for him. Sexwolf had a dog's instinct in all that related to his master; and he felt, though he scarce knew why, that the Norman cloaked some design upon Harold in all the cross questionings so carelessly ventured. And his stiff silence, or bluff replies, when Harold was mentioned, contrasted much the unreserve of his talk when it turned upon the general topics of the day, or the peculiarities of Saxon manners.

By degrees, therefore, the knight, chafed and foiled, drew into himself; and seeing no farther use could be made of the Saxon, suffered his own national scorn of villein companionship to replace his artificial urbanity. He therefore rode alone, and a little in advance of the rest, noticing with a soldier's eye the characteristics of the country, and marvelling, while he rejoiced, at the insignificance of the defences which, even on the Marches, guarded the English country from the Cymrian ravager.* In musings of no very auspicious and friendly nature towards the land he thus visited, the Norman, on the second day from that in which he had conversed with the Abbot, found himself amongst the savage defiles of North Wales.

Pausing there in a narrow pass overhung with wild and desolate rocks, the knight deliberately summoned his squires, clad himself in his ring mail, and mounted his great *destrier*.

"Thou dost wrong, Norman," said Sexwolf, "thou fatiguest thyself in vain—heavy arms here are needless. I have fought in this country before: and as for thy steed, thou wilt soon have to forsake it, and march on foot."

"Know, friend," retorted the knight, "that I come not here to learn the horn book of war; and for the rest, know also, that a noble of Normandy parts with his life ere he forsakes his good steed."

"Ye outlanders and Frenchmen," said Sexwolf, showing the whole of his teeth through his forest of beard, "love boast and big talk; and, on my troth, thou mayst have thy belly full of them yet; for we are still in the track of Harold, and Harold never leaves behind him a foe. Thou art as safe here, as if singing psalms in a convent."

"For thy jests, let them pass, courteous sir," said the Norman; "but I pray thee only not to call me Frenchman.* I impute it to thy ignorance in things comely and martial, and not to thy design to insult me. Though my own mother was French, learn that a Norman despises a Frank only less than he doth a Jew."

"Crave your grace," said the Saxon, "but I thought all ye outlanders were the same, rib and rib, sibbe and sibbe."

"Thou wilt know better one of these days. March on, master Sexwolf."

The pass gradually opened on a wide patch of rugged and herbless waste; and Sexwolf, riding up to the knight, directed his attention to a stone, on which was inscribed the words, "*Hic victor fuit Haroldus*,"—Here Harold conquered.

"In sight of a stone like that, no Walloon dare come," said the Saxon.

"A simple and classical trophy," remarked the Norman, complacently, "and saith much. I am glad to see thy lord knows the Latin."

"I say not that he knows Latin," replied the prudent Saxon; fearing that that could be no wholesome information on his lord's part, which was of a kind to give gladness to the Norman—"Ride on while the road lets ye—in God's name."

On the confines of Caernarvonshire, the troop halted at a small village, round which had been newly dug a deep military trench, bristling with palisades, and within its confines might be seen,—some reclined on the grass, some at dice, some drinking,—many men, whose garbs of tanned hide, as well as

* See note (*k*) at the end.

* The Normans and French detested each other; and it was the Norman who taught to the Saxon his own animosities against the Frank. A very eminent antiquary, indeed, De la Rue, considered that the Bayeux tapestry could not be the work of Matilda, or her age, because in it the Normans are called *French*. But that is a gross blunder on his part; for William, in his own charters, calls the Normans "*Franci*." Wace, in his "Roman de Rou," often styles the Normans "French;" and William of Poitiers, a contemporary of the Conqueror, gives them also in one passage the same name. Still, it is true that the Normans were generally very tenacious of their distinction from their gallant but hostile neighbors.

a pennon waving from a little mound in the midst, bearing the tiger heads of Earl Harold's insignia, showed them to be Saxons.

"Here we shall learn," said Sexwolf, "what the Earl is about—and here, at present, ends my journey."

"Are these the Earl's head-quarters then?—no castle, even of wood—no wall, nought but ditch and palisades?" asked Mallet de Graville in a tone between surprise and contempt.

"Norman," said Sexwolf, "the castle is there, though you see it not, and so are the walls. The castle is Harold's name, which no Walloon will dare to confront; and the walls are the heaps of the slain which lie in every valley around." So saying, he wound his horn, which was speedily answered, and led the way over a plank which admitted across the trench.

"Not even a draw-bridge!" groaned the knight.

Sexwolf exchanged a few words with one who seemed the head of the small garrison, and then regaining the Norman, said, "The Earl and his men have advanced into the mountainous regions of Snowdon; and there, it is said, the blood-lusting Gryffyth is at length driven to bay. Harold hath left orders that, after as brief a refreshment as may be, I and my men, taking the guide he hath left for us, join him on foot. There may now be danger: for, though Gryffyth himself may be pinned to his heights, he may have yet some friends in these parts to start up from crag and combe. The way on horse is impassable: wherefore, master Norman, as our quarrel is not thine nor thine our lord, I commend thee to halt here in peace and in safety, with the sick and the prisoners."

"It is a merry companionship, doubtless," said the Norman; "but one travels to learn, and I would fain see somewhat of thine uncivil skirmishings with these men of the mountains; wherefore, as I fear my poor mules are light of the provender, give me to eat and to drink. And then shalt thou see, should we come in sight of the enemy, if a Norman's big words are the sauce of small deeds."

"Well spoken, and better than I reckoned on," said Sexwolf, heartily.

While De Graville, alighting, sauntered about the village, the rest of the troop exchanged greetings with their countrymen. It was, even to the warrior's eye, a mournful scene. Here and there, heaps of ashes and ruin—houses riddled and burned—the small, humble church, untouched indeed by war, but looking desolate and forlorn—with sheep grazing on large recent mounds thrown over the brave dead, who slept in the ancestral spot they had defended.

The air was fragrant with the spicy smells of the gale or bog myrtle; and the village lay sequestered in a scene wild indeed and savage, but prodigal of a stern beauty to which the Norman, poet by race, and scholar by culture, was not insensible. Seating himself on a rude stone, apart from all the warlike and murmuring groups, he looked forth on the dim and vast mountain peaks, and the rivulet that rushed below, intersecting the village, and lost amidst copses of mountain ash. From these more refined contemplations, he was roused by Sexwolf, who, with greater courtesy than was habitual to him, accompanied the theowes who brought the knight a repast, consisting of cheese, and small pieces of scethed kid, with a large horn of very indifferent mead.

"The Earl puts all his men on Welch diet," said the captain apologetically. "For indeed, in this lengthy warfare, nought else is to be had!"

The knight curiously inspected the cheese, and bent earnestly over the kid.

"It sufficeth, good Sexwolf," said he, suppressing a natural sigh. "But instead of this honey-drink, which is more fit for bees than for men, get me a draught of fresh water: water is your only safe drink before fighting."

"Thou hast never drank ale, then!" said the Saxon; "but thy foreign tastes shall be heeded, strange man."

A little after noon, the horns were sounded, and the troop prepared to depart. But the Norman observed that they had left behind all their horses; and his squire approaching, informed him that Sexwolf had positively forbidden the knight's steed to be brought forth.

"Was it ever heard before," cried Sire Mallet de Graville, "that a Norman knight was expected to walk, and to walk against a

foe too! Call hither the villein,—that is, the captain."

But Sexwolf himself here appeared, and to him De Graville addressed his indignant remonstrance. The Saxon stood firm, and to each argument replied simply, "It is the Earl's orders;" and finally wound up with a bluff—"Go, or let alone; stay here with thy horse, or march with us on thy feet."

"My horse is a gentleman," answered the knight, "and, as such, would be my more fitting companion. But as it is, I yield to compulsion—I bid thee solemnly observe, by compulsion; so that it may never be said of William Mallet de Graville, that he walked, *bon gré*, to battle." With that, he loosened his sword in the sheath, and still retaining his ring mail, fitting close as a shirt, strode on with the rest.

A Welch guide, subject to one of the Under-kings (who was in allegiance to England, and animated, as many of those petty chiefs were, with a vindictive jealousy against the rival tribe of Gryffyth, far more intense than his dislike of the Saxon), led the way.

The road wound for some time along the course of the river Conway; Penmaen-mawr loomed before them. Not a human being came in sight, not a goat was seen on the distant ridges, not a sheep on the pastures. The solitude in the glare of the broad August sun was oppressive. Some houses they passed—if buildings of rough stones, containing but a single room, can be called houses—but they were deserted. Desolation preceded their way, for they were on the track of Harold the Victor. At length, they passed the old Conovium, now Caerhên, lying low near the river. There were still (not as we now scarcely discern them, after centuries of havoc,) the mighty ruins of the Romans,—vast shattered walls, a tower half demolished, visible remnants of gigantic baths, and, proudly rising near the present ferry of Tal-y-Cafn, the fortress, almost unmutilated, of Castell-y-Bryn. On the castle waved the pennon of Harold. Many large flat-bottomed boats were moored to the river side, and the whole place bristled with spears and javelins.

Much comforted (for,—though he disdained to murmur, and rather than forego his mail, would have died therein a martyr,—Mallet de Graville was mightily wearied by the weight of his steel), and hoping now to see Harold himself, the knight sprang forward with a spasmodic effort at liveliness, and found himself in the midst of a group, among whom he recognized at a glance his old acquaintance, Godrith. Doffing his helm with its long nose-piece, he caught the thegn's hand, and exclaimed,—

"Well met, *ventre de Guillaume!* well met, O Godree the debonnair! Thou remembrest Mallet de Graville, and in this unseemly guise, on foot, and with villeins, sweating under the eyes of plebeian Phœbus, thou beholdest that much-suffering man!"

"Welcome indeed," returned Godrith, with some embarrassment; "but how camest thou hither, and whom seekest thou?"

"Harold, thy Count, man—and I trust he is here."

"Not so, but not far distant—at a place by the mouth of the river called Caer Gyffin.* Thou shalt take boat, and be there ere the sunset."

"Is a battle at hand? Yon churl disappointed and tricked me; he promised me danger, and not a soul have we met."

"Harold's besom sweeps clean," answered Godrith, smiling. "But thou art like, perhaps, to be in at the death. We have driven this Welch lion to bay at last—He is ours, or grim Famine's. Look yonder;" and Godrith pointed to the heights of Penmaenmawr. "Even at this distance, you may yet descry something gray and dim against the sky."

"Deemest thou my eye so ill practised in siege, as not to see towers? Tall and massive they are, though they seem here as airy as masts, and as dwarfish as landmarks."

"On that hill-top, and in those towers, is Gryffyth, the Welch king, with the last of his force. He cannot escape us; our ships guard all the coasts of the shore; our troops, as here, surround every pass. Spies, night and day, keep watch. The Welch moels (or beacon-rocks) are manned by our warders. And, were the Welch king to descend, signals would blaze from post to post, and gird him with fire and sword. From land to land, from hill to hill, from Hereford to Caerleon, from Caerleon to Milford, from Milford to

* The present town and castle of Conway.

Snowdon, through Snowdon to yonder fort, built, they say, by the fiends or the giants,—through defile and through forest, over rock, through morass, we have pressed on his heels. Battle and foray alike have drawn the blood from his heart; and thou wilt have seen the drops yet red on the way, where the stone tells that Harold was victor."

"A brave man and true king, then, this Gryffyth," said the Norman, with some admiration; "but," he added in a colder tone, "I confess, for my own part, that though I pity the valiant man beaten, I honor the brave man who wins; and though I have seen but little of this rough land as yet, I can well judge from what I have seen, that no captain, not of patience unwearied, and skill most consummate, could conquer a bold enemy in a country where every rock is a fort."

"So I fear," answered Godrith, "that thy countryman Rolf found; for the Welch beat him sadly, and the reason was plain. He insisted on using horses where no horses could climb, and attiring men in full armor to fight against men light and nibble as swallows, that skim the earth, then are lost in the clouds. Harold, more wise, turned our Saxons into Welchmen, flying as they flew, climbing where they climbed; it has been as a war of the birds. And now there rests but the eagle, in his last lonely eyrie."

"Thy battles have improved thy eloquence much, Messire Godree," said the Norman, condescendingly. "Nevertheless, I cannot but think a few light horse——"

"Could scale yon mountain-brow?" said Godrith, laughing, and pointing to Penmaen-mawr.

The Norman looked and was silent, though he thought to himself "That Sexwolf was no such dolt after all!"

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

THE WELCH KING.

CHAPTER I.

THE sun had just cast its last beams over the breadth of water into which Conway, or rather Cyn-wy, "the great river," emerges its winding waves. Not at that time existed the matchless castle, which is now the monument of Edward Plantagenet, and the boast of Wales. But besides all the beauty the spot took from nature, it had even some claim from ancient art. A rude fortress rose above the stream of Gyffin, out of the wrecks of some greater Roman hold,* and vast ruins of a former town lay round it; while opposite the fort, on the huge and ragged promontory of Gogarth, might still be seen, forlorn and gray, the wrecks of the imperial city, destroyed ages before by lightning.

All these remains of a power and a pomp that Rome in vain had bequeathed to the Briton, were full of pathetic and solemn interest, when blent with the thought, that on yonder steep, the brave prince of a race of heroes, whose line transcended, by ages, all the other royalties of the North, awaited, amidst the ruins of man, and in the stronghold which nature yet gave, the hour of his doom.

But these were not the sentiments of the martial and observant Norman, with the fresh blood of a new race of conquerors.

"In this land," thought he, "far more even than in that of the Saxon, there are the ruins of old; and when the present can neither maintain nor repair the past, its future is subjection or despair."

Agreeably to the peculiar usages of Saxon military skill, which seems to have placed all strength in dykes and ditches, as being perhaps the cheapest and readiest outworks, a new trench had been made round the fort, on two sides, connecting it on the third and fourth with the streams of Gyffin and the Conway. But the boat was rowed up to the very walls, and the Norman, springing to land, was soon ushered into the presence of the Earl.

Harold was seated before a rude table; and, bending over a rough map of the great mountain of Penmaen: a lamp of iron stood beside the map, though the air was yet clear.

The Earl rose, as De Graville, entering with a proud but easy grace habitual to his countrymen, said, in his best Saxon—

"Hail to Earl Harold! William Mallet de Graville, the Norman, greets him, and brings him news from beyond the seas."

There was only one seat in that bare room —the seat from which the Earl had risen. He placed it with simple courtesy before his visitor, and, leaning, himself, against the table, said, in the Norman tongue, which he spoke fluently—

"It is no slight thanks that I owe to the Sire de Graville, that he hath undertaken voyage and journey on my behalf; but before you impart your news, I pray you to take rest and food."

"Rest will not be unwelcome; and food, if unrestricted to goats' cheese, and kid-flesh, —luxuries new to my palate,—will not be untempting; but neither food nor rest can I take, noble Harold, before I excuse myself, as a foreigner, for thus somewhat infringing

* See CAMDEN'S *Britannia*, "*Caernarvonshire*."

your laws by which we are banished, and acknowledging gratefully the courteous behavior I have met from thy countrymen notwithstanding."

"Fair Sir," answered Harold, "pardon us if, jealous of our laws, we have seemed inhospitable to those who would meddle with them. But the Saxon is never more pleased than when the foreigner visits him only as the friend: to the many who settle amongst us for commere—Fleming, Lombard, German, and Saracen—we proffer shelter and welcome; to the few who, like thee, Sir Norman, venture over the seas but to serve us, we give frank cheer and free hand."

Agreeably surprised at this gracious reception from the son of Godwin, the Norman pressed the hand extended to him, and then drew forth a small case, and related accurately, and with feeling, the meeting of his cousin with Sweyn, and Sweyn's dying charge.

The Earl listened, with eyes bent on the ground, and face turned from the lamp; and, when Mallet had concluded his recital, Harold said, with an emotion he struggled in vain to repress—

"I thank you cordially, gentle Norman, for kindness kindly rendered! I—I—" The voice faltered. "Sweyn was very dear to me in his sorrows! We heard that he had died in Lycia, and grieved much and long. So, after he had thus spoken to your cousin, he—he——Alas! O Sweyn, my brother!"

"He died," said the Norman, soothingly; "but shriven and absolved; and my cousin says, calm and hopeful, as they die ever who have knelt at the Saviour's tomb!"

Harold bowed his head, and turned the case that held the letter again and again in his hand, but would not venture to open it. The knight himself, touched by a grief so simple and manly, rose with the delicate instinct that belongs to sympathy, and retired to the door, without which yet waited the officer who had conducted him.

Harold did not attempt to detain him, but followed him across the threshold, and briefly commanding the officer to attend to his guest as to himself, said—"With the morning, Sire de Graville, we shall meet again; I see that you are one to whom I need not excuse man's natural emotions."

"A noble presence!" muttered the knight, as he descended the stairs; "but he hath Norman, at least Norse, blood in his veins on the distaff side.—Fair Sir!"—(this aloud to the officer)—"any meat save the kid-flesh, I pray thee; and any drink save the mead!"

"Fear not, guest," said the officer; "for Tostig the Earl hath two ships in yon bay, and hath sent us supplies that would please Bishop William of London; for Tostig the Earl is a toothsome man."

"Commend me, then, to Tostig the Earl," said the knight; "he is an earl after my own heart."

CHAPTER II.

On re-entering the room, Harold drew the large bolt across the door, opened the case, and took forth the distained and tattered scroll:—

"When this comes to thee, Harold, the brother of thy childish days will sleep in the flesh, and be lost to men's judgment and earth's woe in the spirit. I have knelt at the Tomb; but no dove hath come forth from the cloud,—no stream of grace hath re-baptized the child of wrath! They tell me, now—monk and priest tell me—that I have atoned all my sins; that the dread weregeld is paid; that I may enter the world of men with a spirit free from the load, and a name redeemed from the stain. Think so, O brother!—Bid my father (if he still lives, the dear old man!) think so;—tell Githa to think it; and oh, teach Haco, my son, to hold the belief as a truth! Harold, again I commend to thee my son; be to him as a father! My death surely releases him as a hostage. Let him not grow up in the court of the stranger, in the land of our foes. Let his feet, in his youth, climb the green holts of England;—let his eyes, ere sin dims them, drink the blue of her skies! When this shall reach thee, thou, in thy calm, effortless strength, wilt be more great than Godwin our father. Power came to him with travail and through toil, the geld of craft and of force. Power is born to thee as strength to the strong man; it gathers around thee as thou movest; it is not thine aim, it is thy nature,

to be great. Shield my child with thy might; lead him forth from the prison-house by thy serene right hand! I ask not for lordships and earldoms, as the appanage of his father; train him not to be rival to thee:—I ask but for freedom, and English air! So counting on thee, O Harold, I turn my face to the wall, and hush my wild heart to peace!"

The scroll dropped noiseless from Harold's hand.

"Thus," said he, mournfully, "hath passed away less a life than a dream! Yet of Sweyn, in our childhood, was Godwin most proud; who so lovely in peace, and so terrible in wrath? My mother taught him the songs of the Baltic, and Hilda led his steps through the woodland with tales of hero and scald. Alone of our House, he had the gift of the Dane in the flow of fierce song, and for him things lifeless had being. Stately tree, from which all the birds of heaven sent their carol; where the falcon took roost, whence the mavis flew forth in its glee,—how art thou blasted and seared, bough and core!—smit by the lightning and consumed by the worm!"

He paused, and, though none were by, he long shaded his brow with his hand.

"Now," thought he, as he rose and slowly paced the chamber, "now to what lives yet on earth—his son! Often hath my mother urged me in behalf of these hostages; and often have I sent to reclaim them. Smooth and false pretexts have met my own demand, and even the remonstrance of Edward himself. But surely, now that William hath permitted this Norman to bring over the letter, he will assent to what it hath become a wrong and an insult to refuse; and Haco will return to his father's land, and Wolnoth to his mother's arms."

CHAPTER III.

Messire Mallet de Graville (as becomes a man bred up to arms, and snatching sleep with quick grasp whenever that blessing be his to command) no sooner laid his head on the pallet to which he had been consigned, than his eyes closed, and his senses were deaf even to dreams. But at the dead of the midnight he was wakened by sounds that might have roused the Seven Sleepers—shouts, cries, and yells, the blast of horns, the tramp of feet, and the more distant roar of hurrying multitudes. He leaped from his bed, and the whole chamber was filled with a lurid blood-red air. His first thought was that the fort was on fire. But springing upon the settle along the wall, and looking through the loophole of the tower, it seemed as if not the fort but the whole land was one flame, and through the glowing atmosphere he beheld all the ground, near and far, swarming with men. Hundreds were swimming the rivulet, clambering up dyke mounds, rushing on the levelled spears of the defenders, breaking through line and palisade, pouring into the enclosures; some in half-armor of helm and corslet—others in linen tunics—many almost naked. Loud sharp shrieks of "Alleluia!" * blended with those of "Out! out! Holy crosse!" † He divined at once that the Welch were storming the Saxon hold. Short time indeed sufficed for that active knight to case himself in his mail; and, sword in hand, he burst through the door, cleared the stairs, and gained the hall below, which was filled with men arming in haste.

"Where is Harold?" he exclaimed.

"On the trenches already," answered Sexwolf, buckling his corslet of hide. "This Welch hell hath broke loose."

"And yon are their beacon fires? Then the whole land is upon us!"

"Prate less," quoth Sexwolf; "those are the hills now held by the warders of Harold: our spies gave them notice, and the watch-fires prepared us ere the fiends came in sight, otherwise we had been lying here limbless or

* When (A.D. 220) the Bishops, Germanicus, and Lupus, headed the Britons against the Picts and Saxons, in Easter week, fresh from their baptism in the Alyn, Germanicus ordered them to attend to his war cry, and repeat it; he gave "Alleluia." The hills so loudly re-echoed the cry, that the enemy caught panic, and fled with great slaughter. Maes Garmon, in Flintshire, was the scene of the victory.

† The cry of the English at the onset of battle was "Holy Crosse, God Almighty;" afterwards in fight, "Ouct, ouct," out, out.—Hearnes' *Disc. Antiquity of Motts.*

The latter cry, probably, originated in the habit of defending their standard and central posts with barricades and closed shields; and thus, idiomatically and vulgarly, signified "get out."

headless. Now, men, draw up, and march forth."

"Hold! hold!" cried the pious knight, crossing himself, "is there no priest here to bless us? first a prayer and a psalm!"

"Prayer and psalm!" cried Sexwolf, astonished, "an thou hadst said ale and mead, I could have understood thee.—Out! Out!—Holyrood, Holyrood!"

"The godless paynims!" muttered the Norman, borne away with the crowd.

Once in the open space, the scene was terrific. Brief as had been the onslaught the carnage was already unspeakable. By dint of sheer physical numbers, animated by a valor that seemed as the frenzy of madmen or the hunger of wolves, hosts of the Britons had crossed trench and stream, seizing with their hands the points of the spears opposed to them, bounding over the corpses of their countrymen, and with yells of wild joy rushing upon the close serried lines drawn up before the fort. The stream seemed literally to run gore; pierced by javelins and arrows, corpses floated and vanished, while numbers, undeterred by the havoc, leaped into the waves from the opposite banks. Like bears that surround the ship of a sea-king beneath the polar meteors, or the midnight sun of the north, came the savage warriors through that glaring atmosphere.

Amidst all, two forms were pre-eminent: the one, tall and towering, stood by the trench, and behind a banner, that now drooped round the stave, now streamed wide and broad, stirred by the rush of men—for the night in itself was breezeless. With a vast Danish axe wielded by both hands, stood this man, confronting hundreds, and at each stroke, rapid as the levin, fell a foe. All round him was a wall of his own—the dead. But in the centre of the space, leading on a fresh troop of shouting Welchmen who had forced their way from another part, was a form which seemed charmed against arrow and spear. For the defensive arms of this chief were as slight as if worn but for ornament: a small corselet of gold covered only the centre of his breast, a gold collar of twisted wires circled his throat, and a gold bracelet adorned his bare arm, dropping gore, not his own, from the wrist to the elbow. He was small and slight-shaped—below the common standard of men—but he seemed as one made a giant by the sublime inspiration of war. He wore no helmet, merely a golden circlet; and his hair, of deep red (longer than was usual with the Welch), hung like the mane of a lion over his shoulders, tossing loose with each stride. His eyes glared like the tiger's at night, and he leaped on the spears with a bound. Lost a moment amidst hostile ranks, save by the swift glitter of his short sword, he made, amidst all, a path for himself and his followers, and emerged from the heart of the steel unscathed and loud-breathing; while, round the line he had broken, wheeled and closed his wild men, striking, rushing, slaying, slain.

"*Pardex*, this is war worth the sharing," said the knight. "And now, worthy Sexwolf, thou shalt see if the Norman is the vaunter thou deemest him. *Dieu nous aide! Notre Dame!*—Take the foe in the rear." But turning round, he perceived that Sexwolf had already led his men towards the standard, which showed them where stood the Earl, almost alone in his peril. The knight, thus left to himself, did not hesitate:—a minute more, and he was in the midst of the Welch force, headed by the chief with the golden panoply. Secure in his ring mail against the light weapons of the Welch, the sweep of the Norman sword was as the scythe of Death. Right and left he smote through the throng which he took in the flank, and had almost gained the small phalanx of Saxons, that lay firm in the midst, when the Cymrian Chief's flashing eye was drawn to this new and strange foe, by the roar and the groan round the Norman's way; and with the half-naked breast against the shirt of mail, and the short Roman sword against the long Norman falchion, the Lion King of Wales fronted the knight.

Unequal as seems the encounter, so quick was the spring of the Briton, so pliant his arm, and so rapid his weapon, that that good knight (who, rather from skill and valor than brute physical strength, ranked amongst the prowest of William's band of martial brothers) would willingly have preferred to see before him Fitzosborne or Montgommeri, all clad in steel and armed with mace and lance, than parried those dazzling strokes,

and fronted the angry majesty of that helmless brow. Already the strong rings of his mail had been twice pierced, and his blood trickled fast, while his great sword had but smitten the air in its sweeps at the foe; when the Saxon phalanx, taking advantage of the breach in the ring that girt them, caused by this diversion, and recognizing with fierce ire the gold torque and breastplate of the Welch King, made their desperate charge. Then for some minutes the *pêle mêle* was confused and indistinct—blows blind and at random—death coming no man knew whence or how; till discipline and steadfast order (which the Saxons kept, as by mechanism, through the discord) obstinately prevailed. The wedge forced its way; and, though reduced in numbers and sore wounded, the Saxon troop cleared the ring, and joined the main force drawn up by the fort, and guarded in the rear by its wall.

Meanwhile Harold, supported by the band under Sexwolf, had succeeded at length in repelling farther reinforcements of the Welch at the more accessible part of the trenches; and casting now his practised eye over the field, he issued orders for some of the men to regain the fort, and open from the battlements, and from every loophole, the batteries of stone and javelin, which then (with the Saxons, unskilled in sieges,) formed the main artillery of forts. These orders given, he planted Sexwolf and most of his band to keep watch round the trenches; and shading his eye with his hand, and looking towards the moon, all waning and dimmed in the watchfires, he said calmly, "Now patience fights for us. Ere the moon reaches yon hill-top, the troops at Aber and Caer hén will be on the slopes of Penmaen, and cut off the retreat of the Walloons. Advance my flag to the thick of yon strife."

But as the Earl, with his axe swung over his shoulder, and followed but by some half-score or more with his banner, strode on where the wild war was now mainly concentred, just midway between trench and fort, Gryffyth caught sight both of the banner and the Earl, and left the press at the very moment when he had gained the greatest advantage; and when indeed, but for the Norman, who, wounded as he was, and unused to fight on foot, stood resolute in the van, the Saxons, wearied out by numbers, and falling fast beneath the javelins, would have fled into their walls, and so sealed their fate,—for the Welch would have entered at their heels.

But it was the misfortune of the Welch heroes never to learn that war is a science; and instead of now centring all force on the point most weakened, the whole field vanished from the fierce eye of the Welch King, when he saw the banner and form of Harold.

The Earl beheld the coming foe, wheeling round, as the hawk on the heron;—halted, drew up his few men in a semicircle, with their large shields as a rampart, and their levelled spears as a palisade; and before them all, as a tower, stood Harold with his axe. In a minute more he was surrounded; and through the rain of javelins that poured upon him, hissed and glittered the sword of Gryffyth. But Harold, more practised than the Sire de Graville in the sword-play of the Welch, and unencumbered by other defensive armor (save only the helm, which was shaped like the Norman's,) than his light coat of hide, opposed quickness to quickness and suddenly dropping his axe, sprang upon his foe, and clasping him round with the left arm, with the right hand griped at his throat,—

"Yield, and quarter!—yield, for thy life, son of Llewellyn!"

Strong was that embrace, and deathlike that gripe; yet, as the snake from the hand of the dervise—as a ghost from the grasp of the dreamer, the lithe Cymrian glided away, and the broken torque was all that remained in the clutch of Harold.

At this moment a mighty yell of despair broke from the Welch near the fort: stones and javelins rained upon them from the walls, and the fierce Norman was in the midst, with his sword drinking blood; but not for javelin, stone, and sword, shrank and shouted the Welchmen. On the other side of the trenches were marching against them their own countrymen, the rival tribes that helped the stranger to rend the land; and far to the right were seen the spears of the Saxon from Aber, and to the left was heard the shout of the forces under Godrith from Caer hén; and they who had sought the leopard in his lair were now themselves the

prey caught in the toils. With new heart, as they beheld these reinforcements, the Saxons pressed on; tumult, and flight, and indiscriminate slaughter, wrapped the field. The Welch rushed to the stream and the trenches; and in the bustle and hurlabaloo, Gryffyth was swept along, as a bull by a torrent; still facing the foe, now chiding, now smiting his own men, now rushing alone on the pursuers, and halting their onslaught, he gained, still unwounded, the stream, paused a moment, laughed loud, and sprang into the wave. A hundred javelins hissed into the sullen and bloody waters. "Hold!" cried Harold the Earl, lifting his hand on high, "No dastard dart at the brave!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE fugitive Britons, scarce one-tenth of the number that had first rushed to the attack,—performed their flight with the same Parthian rapidity that characterized the assault; and escaping both Welch foe and Saxon, though the former broke ground to pursue them, they regained the steeps of Penmaen.

There was no further thought of slumber that night within the walls. While the wounded were tended, and the dead were cleared from the soil, Harold, with three of his chiefs, and Mallet de Graville, whose feats rendered it more than ungracious to refuse his request that he might assist in the council, conferred upon the means of terminating the war with the next day. Two of the thegns, their blood hot with strife and revenge, proposed to scale the mountain with the whole force the reinforcements had brought them, and put all they found to the sword.

The third, old and prudent, and inured to Welch warfare, thought otherwise.

"None of us," said he, "know what is the true strength of the place which ye propose to storm. Not even one Welchman have we found who hath ever himself gained the summit, or examined the castle which is said to exist there." *

"Said!" echoed De Graville, who, relieved of his mail, and with his wounds bandaged, reclined on his furs on the floor. "Said, noble sir! Cannot our eyes perceive the towers?"

The old thegn shook his head. "At a distance, and through mists, stones loom large, and crags themselves take strange shapes. It may be castle, it may be rock, may be old roofless temples of heathenesse that we see. But to repeat (and, as I am slow, I pray not again to be put out in my speech)—none of us know what, there, exists of defence, man-made or Nature-built. Not even thy Welch spies, son of Godwin, have gained to the heights. In the midst lie the scouts of the Welch king, and those on the top can see the bird fly, the goat climb. Few of thy spies, indeed, have ever returned with life; their heads have been left at the foot of the hill, with the scroll in their lips,—*Dic ad inferos—quid in superis novisti.*' Tell to the shades below what thou hast seen in the heights above."

"And the Walloons know Latin!" muttered the knight; "I respect them!"

The slow thegh frowned, stammered, and renewed—

"One thing at least is clear; that the rock is well-nigh insurmountable to those who know not the passes; that strict watch, baffling even Welch spies, is kept night and day; that the men on the summit are desperate and fierce; that our own troops are awed and terrified by the belief of the Welch, that the spot is haunted and the towers fiend-founded. One single defeat may lose us two years of victory. Gryffyth may break from the eyrie, regain what he hath lost, win back our Welch allies, ever faithless and hollow. Wherefore, I say, go on as we have begun. Beset all the country round; cut off all supplies, and let the foe rot by famine—or waste, as he hath done this night, his strength by vain onslaught and sally."

"Thy counsel is good," said Harold, "but there is yet something to add to it, which may shorten the strife, and gain the end with less sacrifice of life. The defeat of to-night will have humbled the spirits of the Welch; take them yet in the hour of despair and disaster. I wish, therefore, to send to their outposts

* Certain high places in Wales, of which this might well be one, were held so sacred, that even the dwellers in the immediate neighborhood never presumed to approach them.

a nuncius, with these terms—'Life and pardon to all who lay down arms and surrender.'"

"What, after such havoc and gore?" cried one of the thegns.

"They defend their own soil," replied the Earl simply: "had not we done the same?"

"But the rebel Gryffyth?" asked the old thegn, "thou canst not accept *him* again as crowned sub-king of Edward?"

"No," said the Earl, "I propose to exempt Gryffyth alone from the pardon, with promise, natheless, of life, if he give himself up as prisoner; and count, without further condition, on the king's mercy." There was a prolonged silence. None spoke against the Earl's proposal, though the two younger thegns misliked it much.

At last said the elder, "But hast thou thought who will carry this message? Fierce and wild are yon blood-dogs; and man must needs shrive soul and make will, if he go to their kennel."

"I feel sure that my bode will be safe," answered Harold; "for Gryffyth has all the pride of a king, and, sparing neither man nor child in the onslaught, will respect what the Roman taught his sires to respect—envoy from chief to chief—as a head scatheless and sacred."

"Choose whom thou wilt, Harold," said one of the young thegns, laughing, "but spare thy friends; and whomsoever thou choosest, pay his widow the weregeld."

"Fair Sirs," then said De Graville, "if ye think that I, though a stranger, could serve you as nuncius, it would be a pleasure to me to undertake this mission. First, because, being curious as concerns forts and castles, I would fain see if mine eyes have deceived me in taking yon towers for a hold of great might. Secondly, because that same wild cat of a king must have a court rare to visit. And the only reflection that withholds my pressing the offer as a personal suit is, that though I have some words of the Breton jargon at my tongue's need, I cannot pretend to be a Tully in Welch; howbeit, since it seems that one, at least, among them knows something of Latin, I doubt not but what I shall get out my meaning!"

"Nay, as to that, Sire de Graville," said Harold, who seemed well pleased with the knight's offer, "there shall be no hindrance or let, as I will make clear to you; and in spite of what you have just heard, Gryffyth shall harm you not in limb or in life. But, kindly and courteous Sir, will your wounds permit the journey, not long, but steep and laborious, and only to be made on foot?"

"On foot!" said the knight, a little staggered, "*Pardex!* well and truly, I did not count upon that!"

"Enough," said Harold, turning away in evident disappointment, "think of it no more."

"Nay, by your leave, what I have once said I stand to," returned the knight; "albeit, you may as well cleave in two one of those respectable centaurs of which we have read in our youth, as part Norman and horse. I will forthwith go to my chamber, and apparel myself becomingly—not forgetting, in case of the worst, to wear my mail under my robe. Vouchsafe me but an armorer, just to rivet up the rings through which scratched so felinely the paw of that well-appelled *Griffin*."

"I accept your offer frankly," said Harold, "and all shall be prepared for you, as soon as you yourself will re-seek me here."

The knight rose, and though somewhat stiff and smarting with his wounds, left the room lightly, summoned his armorer and squire, and having dressed with all the care and pomp habitual to a Norman, his gold chain round his neck, and his vest stiff with broidery, he re-entered the apartment of Harold. The Earl received him alone, and came up to him with a cordial face. "I thank thee more, brave Norman, than I ventured to say before my thegns, for I tell thee frankly, that my intent and aim are to save the life of this brave king; and thou canst well understand that every Saxon amongst us must have his blood warmed by contest, and his eyes blind with national hate. You alone, as a stranger, see the valiant warrior and hunted prince, and as such you can feel for him the noble pity of manly foes."

"That is true," said De Graville, a little surprised, "though we Normans are at least as fierce as you Saxons, when we have once tasted blood; and I own nothing would please me better than to dress that catama-

ran in mail, put a spear in its claws, and a horse under its legs, and thus fight out my disgrace at being so clawed and mauled by its *griffes*. And though I respect a brave knight in distress, I can scarce extend my compassion to a thing that fights against all rule, martial and kingly."

The Earl smiled gravely. "It is the mode in which his ancestors rushed on the spears of Cæsar. Pardon him."

"I pardon him, at your gracious request," quoth the knight, with a grand air, and waving his hands; "say on."

"You will proceed with a Welch monk—whom, though not of the faction of Gryffyth, all Welchmen respect—to the mouth of a frightful pass, skirting the river; the monk will bear aloft the holy rood in signal of peace. Arrived at that pass, you will doubtless be stopped. The monk here will be spokesman; and ask safe-conduct to Gryffyth to deliver my message; he will also bear certain tokens, which will no doubt win the way for you.

"Arrived before Gryffyth, the monk will accost him; mark and heed well his gestures, since thou wilt know not the Welch tongue he employs. And when he raises the rood, thou,—in the meanwhile, having artfully approached close to Gryffyth,—wilt whisper in Saxon, which he well understands, and pressing the ring I now give thee into his hand: 'Obey, by this pledge; thou knowest Harold is true, and thy head is sold by thine own people.' If he asks more, thou knowest nought."

"So far, this is as should be from chief to chief," said the Norman, touched, "and thus had Fitzosborne done to his foe. I thank thee for this mission, and the more that thou hast not asked me to note the strength of the bulwark, and number the men that may keep it."

Again Harold smiled. "Praise me not for this, noble Norman—we plain Saxons have not your refinements. If ye are led to the summit, which I think ye will not be, the monk at least will have eyes to see, and tongue to relate. But to thee I confide this much;—I know, already, that Gryffyth's strongholds are not his walls and his towers, but the superstition of our men, and the despair of his own. I could win those heights, as I have won heights as cloudcapt, but with fearful loss of my own troops, and the massacre of every foe. Both I would spare, if I may."

"Yet thou hast not shown such value for life, in the solitudes I passed," said the knight bluntly.

Harold turned pale, but said firmly, "Sire de Graville, a stern thing is duty, and resistless is its voice. These Welchmen, unless curbed to their mountains, eat into the strength of England, as the tide gnaws into a shore. Merciless were they in their ravages on our borders, and ghastly and torturing their fell revenge. But it is one thing to grapple with a foe fierce and strong, and another to smite when his power is gone, fang and talon. And when I see before me the fated king of a great race, and the last band of doomed heroes, too few and too feeble to make head against my arms,—when the land is already my own, and the sword is that of the deathsman, not of the warrior,—verily, Sir Norman, duty releases its iron tool, and man becomes man again."

"I go," said the Norman, inclining his head low as to his own great Duke, and turning to the door; yet there he paused, and looking at the ring which he had placed on his finger, he said, "But one word more, if not indiscreet—your answer may help argument, if argument be needed. What tale lies hid in this token?"

Harold colored and paused a moment, then answered,—

"Simply this. Gryffyth's wife, the lady Aldyth, a Saxon by birth, fell into my hands. We were storming Rhadlin, at the farther end of the isle; she was there. We war not against women; I feared the licence of my own soldiers, and I sent the lady to Gryffyth. Aldyth gave me this ring on parting; and I bade her tell Gryffyth that whenever, at the hour of his last peril and sorest need, I sent that ring back to him, he might hold it the pledge of his life."

"Is this lady, think you, in the stronghold with her lord?"

"I am not sure, but I fear yes," answered Harold.

"Yet one word: And if Gryffyth refuse, despite all warning?"

Harold's eyes drooped.

"If so, he dies; but not by the Saxon sword. God and our lady speed you!"

CHAPTER V.

On the height called Pen-y-Dinas (or "Head of the City"), forming one of the summits of Penmaen-mawr, and in the heart of that supposed fortress which no eye in the Saxon camp had surveyed,* reclined Gryffyth, the hunted king. Nor is it marvellous that at that day there should be disputes as to the nature and strength of the supposed bulwark, since, in times the most recent, and among antiquaries the most learned, the greatest discrepancies exist, not only as to theoretical opinion, but plain matter of observation, and simple measurement. The place, however, I need scarcely say, was not as we see it now, with its foundations of gigantic ruin, affording ample space for conjecture; yet, even then, a wreck as of Titans, its date and purpose were lost in remote antiquity.

The central area (in which the Welch king now reclined), formed an oval barrow of loose stones: whether so left from the origin, or the relics of some vanished building, was unknown even to bard and diviner. Round this space were four strong circumvallations of loose stones, with a space about eighty yards between each; the walls themselves generally about eight feet wide, but of various height, as the stones had fallen by time and blast.

Along these walls rose numerous and almost countless circular buildings, which might pass for towers, though only a few had been recently and rudely roofed in. To the whole of this quadruple enclosure there was but one narrow entrance, now left open as if in scorn of assault; and a winding narrow pass down the mountain, with innumerable curves, alone led to the single threshold. Far down the hill, walls again were visible; and the whole surface of the steep soil, more than half way in the descent, was heaped with vast loose stones, as if the bones of a dead city. But beyond the innermost enclosure of the fort (if fort, or sacred enclosure, be the correcter name), rose, thick and frequent, other mementos of the Briton; many cromlechs, already shattered and shapeless; the ruins of stone houses; and high over all, those upraised, mighty amber piles, as at Stonehenge, once reared, if our dim learning be true, in honor to Bel, or Bâl-Huan,* the idol of the sun. All, in short, showed that the name of the place, "the Head of the City," told its tale; all announced that, there, once the Celt had his home, and the gods of the Druid their worship. And musing amidst these skeletons of the past, lay the doomed son of Pen Dragon.

Beside him a kind of throne had been raised with stones, and over it was spread a tattered and faded velvet pall. On this throne sat Aldyth the Queen; and about the royal pair was still that mockery of a court which the jealous pride of the Celt king retained amidst all the horrors of carnage and famine. Most of the officers, indeed (originally in number twenty-four), whose duties attached them to the king and queen of the Cymry, were already feeding the crow or the worm. But still, with gaunt hawk on his wrist, the penhebogydd (grand falconer) stood at a distance; still, with beard sweeping his breast, and rod in hand, leant against a projecting shaft of the wall, the noiseless gosdegwr, whose duty it was to command silence in the king's hall; and still the penbard bent over his bruised harp, which once had thrilled, through the fair vaults of Caerleon and Rhadlan, in high praise of God, and the King, and the Hero Dead. In the pomp of gold dish and vessel† the board

* See note (*l*) at the end.

* See note (*m*) at the end.

† The Welch seem to have had a profusion of the precious metals, very disproportioned to the scarcity of their coined money. To say nothing of the torques, bracelets, and even breastplates of gold, common with their numerous chiefs, their laws affix to offences penalties which attest the prevalent waste both of gold and silver. Thus, an insult to a subking of Aberfraw, is atoned by a silver rod as thick as the king's little finger, which is in length to reach from the ground to his mouth when sitting; and a gold cup, with a cover as broad as the king's face, and the thickness of a ploughman's nail, or the shell of a goose's egg. I suspect that it was precisely because the Welch coined little or no money, that the metals they possessed became thus common in domestic use. Gold would have been more rarely seen, even amongst the Peruvians, had they coined it into money.

was spread on the stones for the king and queen; and on the dish was the last fragment of black bread, and in the vessel, full and clear, the water from the spring that bubbled up everlastingly through the bones of the dead city.

Beyond this innermost space, round a basin of rock, through which the stream overflowed as from an artificial conduit, lay the wounded and exhausted, crawling, turn by turn, to the lips of the basin, and happy that the thirst of fever saved them from the gnawing desire of food. A wan and spectral figure glided listlessly to and fro amidst those mangled, and parched, and dying groups. This personage, in happier times, filled the office of physician to the court, and was placed twelfth in rank amidst the chiefs of the household. And for cure of the "three deadly wounds," the cloven skull, or the gaping viscera, or the broken limb (all three classed alike), large should have been his fee.* But feeless went he now from man to man, with his red ointment and his muttered charm; and those over whom he shook his lean face and matted locks, smiled ghastly at that sign that release and death were near. Within the enclosures, either lay supine, or stalked restless, the withered remains of the wild army. A sheep, and a horse, and a dog, were yet left them all to share for the day's meal. And the fire of flickering and crackling brushwood burned bright from a hollow amidst the loose stones; but the animals were yet unslain, and the dog crept by the fire, winking at it with dim eyes.

But over the lower part of the wall nearest to the barrow, leant three men. The wall there was so broken, that they could gaze over it on that grotesque yet dismal court; and the eyes of the three men, with a fierce and wolfish glare, were bent on Gryffyth.

Three princes were they of the great old line; far as Gryffyth they traced the fabulous honors of their race, to Hu-Gadarn and Prydain, and each thought it shame that Gryffyth should be lord over him! Each had had throne and court of his own; each his "white palace" of peeled willow wands —poor substitutes, O kings, for the palaces and towers that the arts of Rome had bequeathed your fathers! And each had been subjugated by the son of Llewellyn, when, in his day of might, he reunited under his sole sway all the multiform principalities of Wales, and regained, for a moment's splendor, the throne of Roderic the Great.

"Is it," said Owain, in a hollow whisper, "for yon man, whom heaven hath deserted, who could not keep his very torque from the gripe of the Saxon, that we are to die on these hills, gnawing the flesh from our bones? Think ye not the hour is come?"

"The hour will come, when the sheep, and the horse, and the dog are devoured," replied Modred, "and when the whole force, as one man, will cry to Gryffyth, '*Thou* a king!—give us bread!'"

"It is well," said the third, an old man, leaning on a wand of solid silver, while the mountain wind, sweeping between the walls, played with the rags of his robe,—"It is well that the night's sally, less of war than of hunger, was foiled even of forage and food. Had the saints been with Gryffyth, who had dared to keep faith with Tostig the Saxon?"

Owain laughed, a laugh hollow and false.

"Art thou Cymrian, and talkest of faith with a Saxon? Faith with the spoiler, the ravisher and butcher? But a Cymrian keeps faith with revenge; and Gryffyth's trunk should be still crownless and headless, though Tostig had never proffered the barter of safety and food. Hist! Gryffyth wakes from the black dream, and his eyes glow from under his hair."

And indeed at this moment the King raised himself on his elbow, and looked round with a haggard and fierce despair in his glittering eyes.

"Play to us, Harper; sing some song of the deeds of old!"

The bard mournfully strove to sweep the harp, but the chords were broken, and the note came discordant and shrill as the sigh of a wailing fiend.

"O King!" said the bard, "the music hath left the harp."

"Ha!" murmured Gryffyth, "and hope the earth! Bard, answer the son of Llewyllyn. Oft in my halls hast thou sung the praise of the men that have been. In the halls

* Leges Wallicæ.

of the race to come, will bards yet unborn sweep their harps to the deeds of thy King? Shall they tell of the day of Torques, by Llyn-Afange, when the princes of Powys fled from his sword as the clouds from the blast of the wind? Shall they sing, as the Hirlas goes round, of his steeds of the sea, when no flag came in sight of his prows between the dark isle of the Druid* and the green pastures of Huerdan?† Or the towns that he fired, on the lands of the Saxon, when Rolf and the Northmen ran fast from his javelin and spear? Or say, Child of Truth, if all that is told of Gryffyth thy King shall be his woe and his shame?"

The bard swept his hand over his eyes, and answered,—

"Bards unborn shall sing of Gryffyth the son of Llewellyn. But the song shall not dwell on the pomp of his power, when twenty sub-kings knelt at his throne, and his beacon was lighted in the holds of the Norman and Saxon. Bards shall sing of the hero, who fought every inch of crag and morass in the front of his men,—and on the heights of Penmaen-mawr, Fame recovers thy crown!"

"Then I have lived as my fathers in life, and shall live with their glory in death!" said Gryffyth; "and so the shadow hath passed from my soul." Then turning round, still propped upon his elbow, he fixed his proud eye upon Aldyth, and said gravely, "Wife, pale is thy face, and gloomy thy brow: mournest thou the throne or the man?"

Aldyth cast on her wild lord a look of more terror than compassion, a look without the grief that is gentle, or the love that reveres; and answered—

"What matter to thee my thoughts or my sufferings? The sword or the famine is the doom thou hast chosen. Listening to vain dreams from thy bard, or thine own pride as idle, thou disdainest life for us both: be it so; let us die!"

A strange blending of fondness and wrath troubled the pride on Gryffyth's features, uncouth and half savage as they were, but still noble and kingly.

"And what terror has death, if thou lovest me?" said he.

Aldyth shivered and turned aside. The unhappy king gazed hard on that face, which, despite sore trial and recent exposure to rough wind and weather, still retained the proverbial beauty of the Saxon women—but beauty without the glow of the heart, as a landscape from which sunlight has vanished; and as he gazed, the color went and came fitfully over his swarthy cheeks, whose hue contrasted the blue of his eye, and the red tawny gold of his shaggy hair.

"Thou wouldst have me," he said at length, "send to Harold thy countryman; thou wouldst have me, *me*—rightful lord of all Britain—beg for mercy, and sue for life. Ah, traitress, and child of robber-sires, fair as Rowena art thou, but no Vortimer am I! Thou turnest in loathing from the lord whose marriage gift was a crown; and the sleek form of thy Saxon Harold rises up through the clouds of the carnage."

All the fierce and dangerous jealousy of man's most human passion—when man loves and hates in a breath—trembled in the Cymrian's voice, and fired his troubled eye; for Aldyth's pale cheek blushed like the rose, but she folded her arms haughtily on her breast, and made no reply.

"No," said Gryffyth, grinding teeth, white* and strong as those of a young hound. "No, Harold in vain sent me the casket; the jewel was gone. In vain thy form returned to my side; thy heart was away with thy captor: and not to save my life (were I so base as to seek it), but to see once more the face of him to whom this cold hand, in whose veins no pulse answers my own, had been given, if thy House had consulted its daughter, wouldst thou have me crouch like a lashed dog at the feet of my foe! Oh shame! shame! shame! Oh worst perfidy of all! Oh sharp—sharper than Saxon sword or serpent's tooth, is—is—"

Tears gushed to those fierce eyes, and the proud king dared not trust to his voice.

Aldyth rose coldly. "Slay me if thou wilt—not insult me. I have said, 'Let us die!'"

With these words, and vouchsafing no look

* Mona, or Anglesea.

† Ireland.

* The Welch were then and still are, remarkable for the beauty of their teeth. Giraldus Cambrensis observes, as something very extraordinary, that *they cleaned them*.

on her lord, she moved away towards the largest tower or cell, in which the single and rude chamber it contained had been set apart for her.

Gryffyth's eye followed her, softening gradually as her form receded, till lost to his sight. And then that peculiar household love, which in uncultivated breasts often survives trust and esteem, rushed back on his rough heart, and weakened it, as woman only can weaken the strong to whom Death is a thought of scorn.

He signed to his bard, who, during the conference between wife and lord, had retired to a distance, and said, with a writhing attempt to smile—

"Was there truth, thinkest thou, in the legend, that Guenever was false to King Arthur?"

"No," answered the bard, divining his lord's thought, "for Guenever survived not the King, and they were buried side by side in the Vale of Avallon."

"Thou art wise in the lore of the heart, and love hath been thy study from youth to gray hairs. Is it love, is it hate, that prefers death for the loved one, to the thought of her life as another's?"

A look of the tenderest compassion passed over the bard's wan face, but vanished in reverence, as he bowed his head and answered—

"O King, who shall say what note the wind calls from the harp, or what impulse love wakes in the soul—now soft and now stern? But," he added, raising his form, and with a dread calm on his brow, "but the love of a king brooks no thought of dishonor: and she who hath laid her head on his breast should sleep in his grave."

"Thou wilt outlive me," said Gryffyth, abruptly. "This carn be my tomb!"

"And if so," said the bard, "thou shalt sleep not alone. In this carn what thou lovest best shall be buried by thy side; the bard shall raise his song over thy grave, and the bosses of shields shall be placed at intervals, as rises and falls the sound of song. Over the grave of *two* shall a new mound arise, and we will bid the mound speak to others in the far days to come. But distant yet be the hour when the mighty shall be laid low! and the tongue of thy bard may yet chant the rush of the lion from the toils and the spears. Hope still!"

Gryffyth, for answer, leant on the harper's shoulder, and pointed silently to the sea, that lay lake-like at the distance, dark—studded with the Saxon fleet. Then turning, his hand stretched over the forms that, hollow-eyed and ghost-like, flitted between the walls, or lay dying, but mute, around the water-spring. His hand then dropped, and rested on the hilt of his sword.

At this moment there was a sudden commotion at the outer entrance of the wall; the crowd gathered to one spot, and there was a loud hum of voices. In a few moments one of the Welch scouts came into the enclosure, and the chiefs of the royal tribes followed him to the carn on which the King stood.

"Of what tellest thou?" said Gryffyth, resuming on the instant all the royalty of his bearing.

"At the mouth of the pass," said the scout, kneeling, "there are a monk bearing the holy rood, and a chief, unarmed. And the monk is Evan, the Cymrian, of Gwentland; and the chief, by his voice, seemeth not to be Saxon. The monk bade me give thee these tokens" (and the scout displayed the broken torque which the King had left in the grasp of Harold, together with a live falcon belled and blinded), "and bade me say thus to the King,—Harold the Earl greets Gryffyth son of Llewellyn, and sends him, in proof of goodwill, the richest prize he hath ever won from a foe; and a hawk, from Llandudno;—that bird which chief and equal give to equal and chief. And he prays Gryffyth, son of Llewellyn, for the sake of his realm and his people, to grant hearing to his nuncius."

A murmur broke from the chiefs—a murmur of joy and surprise from all, save the three conspirators, who interchanged anxious and fiery glances. Gryffyth's hand had already closed, while he uttered a cry that seemed of rapture, on the collar of gold; for the loss of that collar had stung him, perhaps, more than the loss of the crown of all Wales. And his heart, so generous and large, amidst all its rude passions, was touched by the speech and the tokens that honored the fallen outlaw both as foe and as king. Yet in his face there was still seen

a moody and proud struggle; he paused before he turned to his chiefs.

"What counsel ye—ye strong in battle, and wise in debate?" said he.

With one voice all, save the Fatal Three, exclaimed—

"Hear the monk, O King!"

"Shall we dissuade?" whispered Modred to the old chief, his accomplice.

"No; for so doing, we shall offend all:—and we must win all."

Then the bard stepped into the ring. And the ring was hushed, for wise is ever the counsel of him whose book is the human heart.

"Hear the Saxons," said he briefly, and with an air of command when addressing others, which contrasted strongly his tender respect to the King; "hear the Saxons, but not in these walls. Let no man from the foe see our strength or our weakness. We are still mighty and impregnable, while our dwelling is in the realm of the Unknown. Let the King, and his officers of state, and his chieftains of battle, descend to the pass. And behind, at the distance, let the spearmen range from cliff to cliff, as a ladder of steel; so will their numbers seem the greater."

"Thou speakest well," said the King.

Meanwhile the knight and the monk waited below at that terrible pass,* which then lay between mountain and river, and over which the precipices frowned, with a sense of horror and weight. Looking up, the knight murmured,—

"With those stones and crags to roll down on a marching army, the place well defies storm and assault; and a hundred on the height would overmatch thousands below."

He then turned to address a few words, with all the far-famed courtesy of Norman and Frank, to the Welch guards at the outpost. They were picked men; the strongest and best armed and best fed of the group. But they shook their heads and answered not, gazing at him fiercely, and showing their white teeth, as dogs at a bear before they are loosened from the band.

"They understand me not, poor languageless savages!" said Mallet de Graville, turning to the monk, who stood by with the lifted rood; "speak to them in their own jargon."

"Nay," said the Welch monk, who, though of a rival tribe from South Wales, and at the service of Harold, was esteemed throughout the land for piety and learning, "they will not open mouth till the King's orders come to receive, or dismiss us unheard."

"Dismiss us unheard!" repeated the punctilious Norman; "even this poor barbarous King can scarcely be so strange to all comely and gentle usage, as to put such insult on Guillaume Mallet de Graville. But," added the knight, coloring, "I forgot that he is not advised of my name and land; and, indeed, sith thou art to be spokesman, I marved why Harold should have prayed my service at all, at the risk of subjecting a Norman knight to affronts contumelious."

"Peradventure," replied Evan, "peradventure thou hast something to whisper apart to the King, which, as stranger and warrior, none will venture to question; but which from me, as countryman and priest, would excite the jealous suspicions of those around him."

"I conceive thee," said De Graville. "And see, spears are gleaming down the path; and, *per pedes Domini*, yon chief with the mantle, and circlet of gold on his head, is the cat-king that so spitted and scratched in the *mêlée* last night."

"Heed well thy tongue," said Evan, alarmed; "no jests with the leader of men."

"Knowest thou, good monk, that a facete and most *gentil* Roman (if the saintly writer from whom I take the citation reports aright—for, alas! I know not where myself to purchase, or to steal, one copy of Horatius Flaccus) hath said '*Dulce est desipere in loco.*' It is sweet to jest, but not within reach of claws whether of kaisars or cats."

Therewith the knight drew up his spare but stately figure, and, arranging his robe with grace and dignity, awaited the coming chief.

Down the pass, one by one, came first the chiefs, privileged by birth to attend the King: and each, as he reached the mouth of the pass, drew on the upper side, among the stones of the rough ground. Then a ban-

* I believe it was not till the last century that a good road took the place of this pass.

ner, tattered and torn, with the lion ensign that the Welch princes had substituted for the old national dragon, which the Saxons of Wessex had appropriated to themselves,* preceded the steps of the King. Behind him came his falconer and bard, and the rest of his scanty household. The King halted in the pass, a few steps from the Norman knight; and Mallet de Graville, though accustomed to the majestic mien of Duke William, and the practised state of the princes of France and Flanders, felt an involuntary thrill of admiration at the bearing of the great child of Nature with his foot on his father's soil.

Small and slight as was his stature, worn and ragged his mantle of state, there was that in the erect mien and steady eye of the Cymrian hero, which showed one conscious of authority, and potent in will; and the wave of his hand to the knight was the gesture of a prince on his throne. Nor, indeed, was that brave and ill-fated chief without some irregular gleams of mental cultivation, which, under happier auspices, might have centred into steadfast light. Though the learning which had once existed in Wales (the last legacy of Rome) had long since expired in broil and blood, and youths no longer flocked to the colleges of Caerleon, and priests no longer adorned the casuistical theology of the age, Gryffyth himself, the son of a wise and famous father,† had received an education beyond the average of Saxon kings. But intensely national, his mind had turned from all other literature, to the legends, and songs, and chronicles of his land; and if he is the best scholar who best understands his own tongue and its treasures, Gryffyth was the most erudite prince of his age. His natural talents, for war especially, were considerable; and judged fairly—not as mated with an empty treasury, without other army than the capricious will of his subjects afforded, and amidst his bitterest foes in the jealous chiefs of his own country, against the disciplined force, and comparative civilization of the Saxon—but as compared with all the other princes of Wales, in warfare, to which he was habituated, and in which chances were even, the fallen son of Llewellyn had been the most renowned leader that Cymry had known since the death of the great Roderic.

So there he stood; his attendants ghastly with famine, drawn up on the unequal ground; above, on the heights, and rising from the stone crags, long lines of spears artfully placed; and, watching him with deathful eyes, somewhat in his rear, the Traitor Three.

"Speak, father, or chief," said the Welch King in his native tongue; "what would Harold the Earl, of Gryffyth the King?"

Then the monk took up the word and spoke.

"Health to Gryffyth-ap-Llewellyn, his chiefs and his people! Thus saith Harold, King Edward's thegn:—By land all the passes are watched; by sea all the waves are our own. Our swords rest in our sheaths; but Famine marches each hour to gride and to slay. Instead of sure death from the hunger, take sure life from the foe. Free pardon to all, chiefs and people, and safe return to their homes,—save Gryffyth alone. Let him come forth, not as victim and outlaw, not with bent form and clasped hands, but as chief meeting chief, with his household of state. Harold will meet him, in honor, at the gates of the fort. Let Gryffyth submit to King Edward, and ride with Harold to the Court of the Basileus. Harold promises him life, and will plead for his pardon. And though the peace of this realm, and the fortune of war, forbid Harold to say,

* The Saxons of Wessex seem to have adopted the Dragon for their ensign, from an early period. It was probably for this reason that it was assumed by Edward Ironsides, as the hero of the Saxons; the principality of Wessex forming the most important portion of the pure Saxon race, while its founder was the ancestor of the imperial house of the Basileus of Britain. The dragon seems also to have been a Norman ensign. The lions or leopards, popularly assigned to the Conqueror, are certainly a later invention. There is no appearance of them on the banners and shields of the Norman army in the Bayeux tapestry. Armorial bearings were in use amongst the Welch, and even the Saxons, long before heraldry was reduced to a science by the Franks and Normans. And the dragon, which is supposed by many critics to be borrowed from the east, through the Saracens, certainly existed as an armorial ensign with the Cymrians before they could have had any obligation to the songs and legends of that people.

† "In whose time the earth brought forth double, and there was neither beggar nor poor man from the North to the South Sea."—POWELL'S *Hist. of Wales*, p. 83.

'Thou shalt yet be a king;' yet thy crown, son of Llewellyn, shall at least be assured in the line of thy fathers, and the race of Cadwallader shall still reign in Cymry."

The monk paused, and hope and joy were in the faces of the famished chiefs; while two of the Traitor Three suddenly left their post, and sped to tell the message to the spearmen and multitudes above. Modred, the third conspirator, laid his hand on his hilt, and stole near to see the face of the King;—the face of the King was dark and angry, as a midnight of storm.

Then, raising the cross on high, Evan resumed.

"And I, though of the People of Gwentland, which the arms of Gryffyth have wasted, and whose prince fell beneath Gryffyth's sword on the hearth of his hall—I, as God's servant, the brother of all I behold, and, as son of the soil, mourning over the slaughter of its latest defenders,—I, by this symbol of love and command, which I raise to the heaven, adjure thee, O King, to give ear to the mission of peace,—to cast down the grim pride of earth. And instead of the crown of a day, fix thy hopes on the crown everlasting. For much shall be pardoned to thee in thine hour of pomp and of conquest, if now thou savest from doom and from death the last lives over which thou art lord."

It was during this solemn appeal that the knight, marking the sign announced to him, and drawing close to Gryffyth, pressed the ring into the King's hand, and whispered,—

"Obey by this pledge. Thou knowest Harold is true, and thy head is sold by thine own people."

The King cast a haggard eye at the speaker, and then at the ring, over which his hand closed with a convulsive spasm. And at that dread instant, the man prevailed over the king; and far away from people and monk, from adjuration and duty, fled his heart on the wings of the storm—fled to the cold wife he distrusted; and the pledge that should assure him of life, seemed as a love-token insulting his fall:—Amidst all the roar of roused passions, loudest of all was the hiss of the jealous fiend.

As the monk ceased, the thrill of the audience was perceptible, and a deep silence was followed by a general murmur, as if to constrain the King.

Then the pride of the despot chief rose up to second the wrath of the suspecting man. The red spot flushed the dark cheek, and he tossed the neglected hair from his brow.

He made one stride towards the monk, and said, in a voice loud, and deep, and slow, rolling far up the hill,—

"Monk, thou hast said; and now hear the reply of the son of Llewellyn, the true heir of Roderic the Great, who from the heights of Eryri saw all the lands of the Cymrian sleeping under the dragon of Uther. King was I born, and king will I die. I will not ride by the side of the Saxon to the feet of Edward, the son of the spoiler. I will not, to purchase base life, surrender the claim, vain before men and the hour, but solemn before God and posterity—the claim of my line and my people. All Britain is ours—all the Island of Pines. And the children of Hengist are traitors and rebels—not the heirs of Ambrosius and Uther. Say to Harold the Saxon, Ye have left us but the tomb of the Druid and the hills of the eagle; but freedom and royalty are ours, in life and in death—not for you to demand them, not for us to betray. Nor fear ye, O my chiefs, few, but unmatched in glory and truth; fear not ye to perish by the hunger thus denounced as our doom, on these heights that command the fruits of our own fields! No, die we may, but not mute and revengeless. Go back, whispering warrior; go back, false son of Cymry—and tell Harold to look well to his walls and his trenches. We will vouchsafe him grace for his grace—we will not take him by surprise, nor under cloud of the night. With the gleam of our spears and the clash of our shields, we will come from the hill; and, famine-worn as he deems us, hold a feast in his walls which the eagles of Snowdon spread their pinions to share!"

"Rash man and unhappy!" cried the monk; "what curse drawest thou down on thy head! Wilt thou be the murtherer of thy men, in strife unavailing and vain? Heaven holds thee guilty of all the blood thou shalt cause to be shed."

"Be dumb!—hush thy screech, lying raven!" exclaimed Gryffyth, his eyes darting fire, and his slight form dilating. "Once,

priest and monk went before us to inspire, not to daunt; and our cry, Alleluia! was taught us by the saints of the Church, on the day when Saxons, fierce and many as Harold's, fell on the field of Maes-Garmon. No, the curse is on the head of the invader, not on those who defend hearth and altar. Yea, as the song to the bard, the CURSE leaps through my veins, and rushes forth from my lips. By the land they have ravaged; by the gore they have spilt; on these crags, our last refuge; below the carn on yon heights, where the Dead stir to hear me,—I launch the curse of the wronged and the doomed on the children of Hengist! They in turn shall know the steel of the stranger—their crown shall be shivered as glass, and their nobles be as slaves in the land. And the line of Hengist and Cerdic shall be razed from the roll of empire. And the ghosts of our fathers shall glide, appeased, over the grave of their nation. But we—WE, though weak in the body, in the soul shall be strong to the last! The ploughshare may pass over our cities, but the soil shall be trod by our steps, and our deeds keep our language alive in the songs of our bards. Nor, in the great Judgment Day, shall any race but the race of Cymry rise from their graves in this corner of earth, to answer for the sins of the brave!" *

So impressive the voice, so grand the brow, and sublime the wild gesture of the King, as he thus spoke, that not only the monk himself was awed; not only, though he understood not the words, did the Norman knight bow his head, as a child when the lightning he fears as by instinct, flashes out from the cloud,—but even the sullen and wide-spreading discontent at work among most of the chiefs was arrested for a moment. But the spearmen and multitude above, excited by the tidings of safety to life, and worn out by repeated defeat, and the dread fear of famine, too remote to hear the King, were listening eagerly to the insidious addresses of the two stealthy conspirators, creeping from rank to rank; and already they began to sway and move, and sweep slowly down towards the King.

Recovering his surprise, the Norman again neared Gryffyth, and began to re-urge his mission of peace. But the chief waved him back sternly, and said aloud, though in Saxon:—

"No secrets can pass between Harold and me. This much alone, take thou back as answer:—I thank the Earl, for myself, my Queen, and my people. Noble have been his courtesies, as foe; as foe I thank him—as king, defy. The torque he hath returned to my hand, he shall see again ere the sun set. Messengers, ye are answered. Withdraw, and speed fast, that we may pass not your steps on the road."

The monk sighed, and cast a look of holy compassion over the circle; and a pleased man was he to see in the faces of most there, that the King was alone in his fierce defiance. Then lifting again the rood, he turned away, and with him went the Norman.

The retirement of the messengers was the signal for one burst of remonstrance from the chiefs—the signal for the voice and the deeds of the Fatal Three. Down from the heights sprang and rushed the angry and turbulent multitudes; round the King came the bard and the falconer, and some faithful few.

The great uproar of many voices caused the monk and the knight to pause abruptly in their descent, and turn to look behind. They could see the crowd rushing down from the higher steeps; but on the spot itself which they had so lately left, the nature of the ground only permitted a confused view of spear points, lifted swords, and heads crowned with shaggy locks, swaying to and fro.

"What means all this commotion?" asked the knight, with his hand on his sword.

"Hist!" said the monk, pale as ashes, and leaning for support upon the cross.

* "During the military expeditions made in our days against South Wales, an old Welchman, at Pencadair, who had faithfully adhered to him (Henry II.), being desired to give his opinion about the royal army, and whether he thought that of the rebels would make resistance, and what he thought would be the final event of this war, replied: 'This nation, O King, may now, as in former times, be harassed, and, in a great measure, be weakened and destroyed by you and other powers; and it will often prevail by its laudable exertions, but it can never be totally subdued by the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God shall concur. *Nor do I think that any other nation than this of Wales, or any other language (whatever may hereafter come to pass), shall in the day of severe examination before the Supreme Judge answer for this corner of the earth!*'"—HOARE'S *Giraldus Cambrensis*, vol. i. p. 361.

Suddenly, above the hubbub, was heard the voice of the King, in accents of menace and wrath, singularly distinct and clear; it was followed by a moment's silence—a moment's silence followed by the clatter of arms, a yell, and a howl, and the indescribable shock of men.

And suddenly again was heard a voice that seemed that of the King, but no longer distinct and clear!—was it laugh?—was it groan?

All was hushed; the monk was on his knees in prayer; the knight's sword was bare in his hand. All was hushed—and the spears stood still in the air; when there was again a cry, as multitudinous but less savage than before. And the Welch came down the pass, and down the crags.

The knight placed his back to a rock. "They have orders to murther us," he murmured; "but woe to the first who come within reach of my sword!"

Down swarmed the Welchmen, nearer and nearer; and in the midst of them three chiefs, the Fatal Three. And the old chief bore in his hand a pole or spear, and on the top of that spear, trickling gore step by step, was the trunkless head of Gryffyth the King.

"This," said the old chief, as he drew near, "this is our answer to Harold the Earl. We will go with ye."

"Food! food!" cried the multitude.

And the three chiefs (one on either side the trunkless head that the third bore aloft), whispered, "We are avenged!"

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

FATE.

CHAPTER I.

SOME days after the tragical event with which the last chapter closed, the ships of the Saxons were assembled in the wide waters of Conway; and on the small fore deck of the stateliest vessel, stood Harold, bareheaded, before Aldyth the widowed Queen. For the faithful bard had fallen by the side of his lord; . . . . the dark promise was unfulfilled, and the mangled clay of the jealous Gryffyth slept *alone* in the narrow bed. A chair of state, with dossel and canopy, was set for the daughter of Algar, and behind, stood maidens of Wales, selected in haste for her attendants.

But Aldyth had not seated herself; and, side by side with her dead lord's great victor, thus she spoke:—

"Woe worth the day and the hour when Aldyth left the hall of her fathers, and the land of her birth! Her robe of a queen had been rent and torn over an aching heart, and the air she has breathed has reeked as with blood. I go forth, widowed, and homeless, and lonely; but my feet shall press the soil of my sires, and my lips draw the breath which came sweet and pure to my childhood. And thou, O Harold, standest beside me, like the shape of my own youth, and the dreams of old come back at the sound of thy voice. Fare thee well, noble heart, and true Saxon. Thou hast twice saved the child of thy foe—first from shame, then from famine. Thou wouldst have saved my dread lord from open force, and dark murder; but the saints were wroth, the blood of my kinsfolk, shed by his hand, called for vengeance, and the shrines he had pillaged and burned murmured doom from their desolate altars. Peace be with the dead, and peace with the living! I shall go back to my father and brethren; and if the fame and life of child and sister be dear to them, their swords will never more leave their sheaths against Harold. So thy hand, and God guard thee!"

Harold raised to his lips the hand which the Queen extended to him; and to Aldyth now seemed restored the rare beauty of her youth; as pride and sorrow gave her the charm of emotion, which love and duty had failed to bestow.

"Life and health to thee, noble lady," said the Earl. "Tell thy kindred from me, that for thy sake, and thy grandsire's, I would fain be their brother and friend; were they but united with me, all England were now safe against every foe, and each peril. Thy daughter already awaits thee in the halls of Morcar; and when time has scarred the wounds of the past, may thy joys rebloom in the face of thy child. Farewell, noble Aldyth!"

He dropped the hand he had held till then, turned slowly to the side of the vessel, and re-entered his boat. As he was rowed back to shore, the horn gave the signal for raising anchor, and the ship righting itself, moved majestically through the midst of the fleet. But Aldyth still stood erect, and her eyes followed the boat that bore away the secret love of her youth.

As Harold reached the shore, Tostig and the Norman, who had been conversing amicably together on the beach, advanced towards the Earl.

"Brother," said Tostig, smiling, "it were easy for thee to console the fair widow, and

bring to our House all the force of East Anglia and Mercia." Harold's face slightly changed, but he made no answer.

"A marvellous fair dame," said the Norman, "notwithstanding her cheek be somewhat pinched, and the hue sunburnt. And I wonder not that the poor cat-king kept her so close to his side."

"Sir Norman," said the Earl, hastening to change the subject, "the war is now over, and, for long years, Wales will leave our Marches in peace.—This eve I propose to ride hence towards London, and we will converse by the way."

"Go you so soon?" cried the knight, surprised. "Shall you not take means utterly to subjugate this troublesome race, parcel out the lands among your thegns, to hold as martial fiefs at need, build towers and forts on the heights, and at the river mouths?—where a site, like this, for some fair castle and vawmure? In a word, do you Saxons merely overrun, and neglect to hold what you win?"

"We fight in self-defence, not for conquest, sir Norman. We have no skill in building castles; and I pray you not to hint to my thegns the conceit of dividing a land, as thieves would their plunder. King Gryffyth is dead, and his brothers will reign in his stead. England has guarded her realm, and chastised the aggressors. What need England do more? We are not like our first barbarous fathers, carving out homes with the scythe of their sæxes. The wave settles after the flood, and the races of men after lawless convulsions."

Tostig smiled, in disdain, at the Knight, who mused a little over the strange words he had heard, and then silently followed the Earl to the fort.

But when Harold gained his chamber, he found there an express, arrived in haste from Chester, with the news, that Algar, the sole enemy and single rival of his power, was no more. Fever, occasioned by neglected wounds, had stretched him impotent on a bed of sickness, and his fierce passions had aided the march of disease; the restless and profitless race was run.

The first emotion which these tidings called forth, was that of pain. The bold sympathize with the bold; and in great hearts, there is always a certain friendship for a gallant foe. But recovering the shock of that first impression, Harold could not but feel that England was freed from its most dangerous subject—himself from the only obstacle apparent to the fulfilment of his luminous career.

"Now, then, to London," whispered the voice of his ambition. "Not a foe rests to trouble the peace of that empire which thy conquests, O Harold, have made more secure and compact than ever yet has been the realm of the Saxon kings. Thy way through the country that thou hast henceforth delivered from the fire and sword of the mountain ravager, will be one march of triumph, like a Roman's of old; and the voice of the people will echo the hearts of the army; those hearts are thine own. Verily Hilda is a prophetess; and when Edward rests with the saints, from what English heart will not burst the cry, "LONG LIVE HAROLD THE KING?"

CHAPTER II.

THE Norman rode by the side of Harold, in the rear of the victorious armament. The ships sailed to their havens, and Tostig departed to his northern earldom.

"And now," said Harold, "I am at leisure to thank thee, brave Norman, for more than thine aid in council and war;—at leisure now to turn to the last prayer of Sweyn, and the often shed tears of Githa my mother, for Wolnoth the exile. Thou seest with thine own eyes that there is no longer pretext or plea for thy Count to detain these hostages. Thou shalt hear from Edward himself that he no longer asks sureties for the faith of the House of Godwin; and I cannot think that Duke William would have suffered thee to bring me over this news from the dead if he were not prepared to do justice to the living."

"Your speech, Earl of Wessex, goes near to the truth. But, to speak plainly and frankly, I think William, my lord, hath a keen desire to welcome in person a chief so illustrious as Harold, and I guess that he keeps the hostages to make thee come to claim them." The knight, as he spoke,

smiled gaily; but the cunning of the Norman gleamed in the quick glance of his clear hazel eye.

"Fain must I feel pride at such wish, if you flatter me not," said Harold; "and I would gladly myself, now the land is in peace, and my presence not needful, visit a court of such fame. I hear high praise from cheapman and pilgrim of Count William's wise care for barter and trade, and might learn much from the ports of the Seine that would profit the marts of the Thames. Much, too, I hear of Count William's zeal to revive the learning of the Church, aided by Lanfranc the Lombard; much I hear of the pomp of his buildings, and the grace of his court. All this would I cheerfully cross the ocean to see; but all this would but sadden my heart if I returned without Haco and Wolnoth."

"I dare not speak so as to plight faith for the Duke," said the Norman, who, though sharp to deceive, had that rein on his conscience that it did not let him openly lie; "but this I do know, that there are few things in his Countdom which my lord would not give to clasp the right hand of Harold, and fell assured of his friendship."

Though wise and farseeing, Harold was not suspicious;—no Englishman, unless it were Edward himself, knew the secret pretensions of William to the English throne; and he answered simply:—

"It were well, indeed, both for Normandy and England, both against foes and for trade, to be allied and well-liking. I will think over your words, Sire de Graville, and it shall not be my fault if old feuds be not forgotten, and those now in thy court be the last hostages ever kept by the Norman for the faith of the Saxon."

With that he turned the discourse; and the aspiring and able envoy, exhilarated by the hope of a successful mission, animated the way by remarks—alternately lively and shrewd—which drew the brooding Earl from those musings which had now grown habitual to a mind once clear and open as the day.

Harold had not miscalculated the enthusiasm his victories had excited. Where he passed, all the towns poured forth their populations to see and to hail him; and on arriving at the metropolis, the rejoicings in his honor seemed to equal those which had greeted, at the accession of Edward, the restoration of the line of Cerdic.

According to the barbarous custom of the age, the head of the unfortunate sub-king, and the prow of his special war-ship, had been sent to Edward as the trophies of conquest: but Harold's uniform moderation respected the living. The race of Gryffyth * were re-established on the tributary throne of that hero, in the person of his brothers, Blethgent and Rigwatle, "and they swore oaths," says the graphic old chronicler, "and delivered hostages to the King and the Earl that they would be faithful to him in all things, and be everywhere ready for him, by water, and by land, and make such renders from the land as had been done before to any other king."

Not long after this, Mallet de Graville returned to Normandy, with gifts for William from King Edward, and special requests from that prince, as well as from the Earl, to restore the hostages. But Mallet's acuteness readily perceived, that in much, Edward's mind had been alienated from William. It was clear, that the Duke's marriage, and the pledges that had crowned the union, were distasteful to the asceticism of the saint-king: and with Godwin's death, and Tostig's absence from the court, seemed to have expired all Edward's bitterness towards that powerful family of which Harold was now the head.

Still, as no subject out of the House of Cerdic had ever yet been elected to the Saxon throne, there was no apprehension on Mallet's mind that in Harold was the true rival to William's cherished aspirations. Though Edward the Atheling was dead, his son Edgar lived, the natural heir to the throne; and the Norman (whose liege had succeeded to the Duchy at the age of eight), was not sufficiently cognizant of the invariabe custom of the Anglo-Saxons, to set aside, whether for kingdoms or for earldoms, all claimants unfitted for rule by their tender years. He could indeed perceive that the young Atheling's minority was in favor of his Norman liege, and would render him but a weak defender of the realm, and that there seemed no pop-

* Gryffyth left a son, Caradoc; but he was put aside, as a minor, according to the Saxon customs.

ular attachment to the infant orphan of the Germanized exile: his name was never mentioned at the court, nor had Edward acknowledged him as heir,—a circumstance which he interpreted auspiciously for William. Nevertheless, it was clear that, both at court and amongst the people, the Norman influence in England was at the lowest ebb; and that the only man who could restore it, and realize the cherished dreams of his grasping lord, was Harold the all-powerful.

CHAPTER III.

TRUSTING, for the time, to the success of Edward's urgent demand for the release of his kinsmen, as well as his own, Harold was now detained at the court by all those arrears of business which had accumulated fast under the inert hands of the monk-king during the prolonged campaigns against the Welch; but he had leisure at least for frequent visits to the old Roman house; and those visits were not more grateful to his love than to the harder and more engrossing passion which divided his heart.

The nearer he grew to the dazzling object, to the possession of which Fate seemed to have shaped all circumstances, the more he felt the charm of those mystic influences which his colder reason had disdained. He who is ambitious of things afar, and uncertain, passes at once into the Poet-Land of Imagination; to aspire and to imagine are yearnings twin-born.

When in his fresh youth and his calm lofty manhood, Harold saw action, how adventurous soever, limited to the barriers of noble duty; when he lived but for his country, all spread clear before his vision in the sunlight of day; but as the barriers receded, while the horizon extended, his eye left the Certain to rest on the Vague.

As self, though still half concealed from his conscience, gradually assumed the wide space love of country had filled, the maze of delusion commenced; he was to shape fate out of circumstance,—no longer defy fate through virtue; and thus Hilda became to him as a voice that answered the questions of his own restless heart. He needed encouragement from the Unknown to sanction his desires and confirm his ends. But Edith, rejoicing in the fair fame of her betrothed, and content in the pure rapture of beholding him again, reposed in the divine credulity of the happy hour; she marked not, in Harold's visits, that, on entrance, the Earl's eye sought first the stern face of the Vala—she wondered not why those two conversed in whispers together, or stood so often at moonlight by the Runic grave. Alone, of all womankind, she felt that Harold loved her,—that that love had braved time, absence, change, and hope deferred;—and she knew not that what love has most to dread in the wild heart of aspiring man, is not persons, but things,—is not things, but their symbols.

So weeks and months rolled on, and Duke William returned no answer to the demands for his hostages. And Harold's heart smote him, that he neglected his brother's prayer and his mother's accusing tears.

Now Githa, since the death of her husband, had lived in seclusion and apart from town; and one day Harold was surprised by her unexpected arrival at the large timbered house in London, which had passed to his possession. As she abruptly entered the room in which he sate, he sprang forward to welcome and embrace her; but she waved him back with a grave and mournful gesture, and, sinking on one knee, she said thus:—

"See, the mother is a suppliant to the son for the son. No, Harold, no—I will not rise till thou hast heard me. For years, long and lonely, have I lingered and pined,—long years! Will my boy know his mother again? Thou hast said to me, 'Wait till the messenger returns.' I have waited. Thou hast said, 'This time the Count cannot resist the demand of the King.' I bowed my head and submitted to thee as I had done to Godwin my lord. And I have not till now claimed thy promise; for I allowed thy country, thy King, and thy fame, to have claims more strong than a mother. Now I tarry no more; now no more will I be amused and deceived. Thine hours are thine own—free thy coming and thy going. Harold, I claim thine oath. Harold, I touch thy right hand. Harold, I remind thee of thy troth

and thy plight, to cross the seas thyself and restore the child to the mother."

"Oh, rise, rise!" exclaimed Harold, deeply moved. "Patient hast thou been, O my mother, and now I will linger no more, nor hearken to other voice than your own. I will seek the King this day, and ask his leave to cross the sea to Duke William."

Then Githa rose, and fell on the Earl's breast weeping.

CHAPTER IV.

It so chanced, while this interview took place between Githa and the Earl, that Gurth, hawking in the woodlands round Hilda's house, turned aside to visit his Danish kinswoman. The prophetess was absent, but he was told that Edith was within; and Gurth, about to be united to a maiden who had long won his noble affections, cherished a brother's love for his brother's fair betrothed. He entered the gynœcium, and there still, as when we were first made present in that chamber, sate the maids, employed on a work more brilliant to the eye, and more pleasing to the labor, than that which had then tasked their active hands. They were broidering into a tissue of the purest gold the effigy of a fighting warrior, designed by Hilda for the banner of Earl Harold; and, removed from the awe of their mistress, as they worked, their tongues sang gaily, and it was in the midst of song and laughter that the fair young Saxon lord entered the chamber. The babble and the mirth ceased at his entrance; each voice was stilled, each eye cast down demurely. Edith was not amongst them, and, in answer to his inquiry, the eldest of the maidens pointed towards the peristyle without the house.

The winning and kindly thegn paused a few moments, to admire the tissue and commend the work, and then sought the peristyle.

Near the water-spring that gushed free and bright through the Roman fountain, he found Edith, seated in an attitude of deep thought and gloomy dejection. She started as he approached, and, springing forward to meet him, exclaimed:—

"O Gurth, Heaven hath sent thee to me, I know well, though I cannot explain to thee why, for I cannot explain it to myself; but know I do, by the mysterious bodements of my own soul, that some great danger is at this moment encircling thy brother Harold. Go to him, I pray, I implore thee, forthwith; and let thy clear sense and warm heart be by his side."

"I will go instantly," said Gurth, startled. "But do not suffer, I adjure thee, sweet kinswoman, the superstition that wraps this place, as a mist wraps a marsh, to infect thy pure spirit. In my early youth I submitted to the influence of Hilda; I became man, and outgrew it. Much, secretly, has it grieved me of late, to see that our kinswoman's Danish lore has brought even the strong heart of Harold under its spell; and where once he only spoke of *duty*, I now hear him speak of *fate*."

"Alas! alas!" answered Edith, wringing her hands; "when the bird hides its head in the brake, doth it shut out the track of the hound? Can we baffle fate by refusing to heed its approaches? But we waste precious moments. Go, Gurth, dear Gurth! Heavier and darker, while we speak, gathers the cloud on my heart."

Gurth said no more, but hastened to remount his steed; and Edith remained alone by the Roman fountain, motionless and sad, as if the Nymph of the old Religion stood there to see the lessening stream well away from the shattered stone, and know that the life of the nymph was measured by the ebb of the stream.

Gurth arrived in London just as Harold was taking boat for the palace of Westminster, to seek the King; and, after interchanging a hurried embrace with his mother, he accompanied Harold to the palace, and learned his errand by the way. While Harold spoke, he did not foresee any danger to be incurred by a friendly visit to the Norman court; and the interval that elapsed between Harold's communication and their entrance into the King's chamber, allowed no time for mature and careful reflection.

Edward, on whom years and infirmity had increased of late with rapid ravage, heard Harold's request with a grave and deep attention, which he seldom vouchsafed to

earthly affairs. And he remained long silent after his brother-in-law had finished;—so long silent, that the Earl, at first, deemed that he was absorbed in one of those mystic and abstracted reveries, in which, more and more as he grew nearer to the borders of the World Unseen, Edward so strangely indulged.

But, looking more close, both he and Gurth were struck by the evident dismay on the King's face, while the collected light of Edward's cold eye showed that his mind was awake to the human world. In truth, it is probable that Edward, at that moment, was recalling rash hints, if not promises, to his rapacious cousin of Normandy, made during his exile. And, sensible of his own declining health, and the tender years of the young Edgar, he might be musing over the terrible pretender to the English throne, whose claims his earlier indiscretion might seem to sanction. Whatever his thoughts, they were dark and sinister, as at length he said, slowly—

"Is thine oath indeed given to thy mother, and doth she keep thee to it?"

"Both, O King," answered Harold, briefly.

"Then I can gainsay thee not. And thou, Harold, art a man of this living world; thou playest here the part of a centurion; thou sayest 'Come,' and men come—'Go,' and men move at thy will. Therefore thou mayest well judge for thyself. I gainsay thee not, nor interfere between man and his vow. But think not," continued the King in a more solemn voice, and with increasing emotion, "think not that I will charge my soul that I counselled or encouraged this errand. Yea, I foresee that thy journey will lead but to great evil to England, and sore grief or dire loss to thee." *

"How so, dear lord and King?" said Harold, startled by Edward's unwonted earnestness, though deeming it but one of the visionary chimeras habitual to the saint. "How so? William thy cousin hath ever borne the name of one fair to friend, though fierce to foe. And foul indeed his dishonor, if he could meditate harm to a man trusting his faith, and sheltered by his own roof-tree."

"Harold, Harold," said Edward, impatiently, "I know William of old. Nor is he so simple of mind, that he will cede aught for thy pleasure, or even to my will, unless it bring some gain to himself.* I say no more.—Thou art cautioned, and I leave the rest to Heaven."

It is the misfortune of men little famous for worldly lore, that in those few occasions when, in that sagacity caused by their very freedom from the strife and passion of those around, they seem almost prophetically inspired,—it is their misfortune to lack the power of conveying to others their own convictions; they may divine, but they cannot reason: and Harold could detect nothing to deter his purpose, in a vague fear, based on no other argument than as vague a perception of the duke's general character. But Gurth, listening less to his reason than his devoted love for his brother, took alarm, and said, after a pause,

"Thinkest thou, good my King, that the same danger were incurred if Gurth, instead of Harold, crossed the seas to demand the hostages?"

"No," said Edward, eagerly, "and so would I counsel. William would not have the same objects to gain in practising his worldly guile upon thee. No; methinks *that* were the prudent course."

"And the ignoble one for Harold," said the elder brother, almost indignantly. "Howbeit, I thank thee gratefully, dear King, for thy affectionate heed and care. And so the saints guard thee!"

On leaving the King, a warm discussion between the brothers took place. But Gurth's arguments were stronger than those of Harold, and the Earl was driven to rest his persistence on his own special pledge to Githa. As soon, however, as they had gained their home, that plea was taken from him; for the moment Gurth related to his mother Edward's fears and cautions, she, ever mindful of Godwin's preference for the Earl, and his last commands to her, hastened to release Harold from his pledge; and to implore him at least to suffer Gurth to be his substitute to the Norman court. "Listen dispassionately," said Gurth; "rely upon it that Edward has reasons for his fears, more rational than those he has given to us.

* Bromton *Chron.*, Knyghton, Walsingham, Hoveden, etc.

* Bromton, Knyghton, etc.

He knows William from his youth upward, and hath loved him too well to hint doubts of his good faith without just foundation. Are there no reasons why danger from William should be special against thyself? While the Normans abounded in the court, there were rumors that the Duke had some designs on England, which Edward's preference seemed to sanction: such designs now, in the altered state of England, were absurd —too frantic, for a prince of William's reputed wisdom to entertain. Yet he may not unnaturally seek to regain the former Norman influence in these realms. He knows that in you he receives the most powerful man in England; that your detention alone would convulse the country from one end of it to the other; and enable him, perhaps, to extort from Edward some measures dishonorable to us all. But against me he can harbor no ill design—my detention would avail him nothing. And, in truth, if Harold be safe in England, Gurth must be safe in Rouen? Thy presence here at the head of our armies guarantees me from wrong. But reverse the case, and with Gurth in England, is Harold safe in Rouen? I, but a simple soldier, and homely lord, with slight influence over Edward, no command in the country, and little practised of speech in the stormy Witan,—I am just so great that William dare not harm me, but not so great that he should even wish to harm me."

"He detains our kinsmen, why not thee!" said Harold.

"Because with our kinsmen he has at least the pretext that they were pledged as hostages: because I go simply as guest and envoy. No, to me danger cannot come. Be ruled, dear Harold."

"Be ruled, O my son," cried Githa, clasping the Earl's knees, "and do not let me dread in the depth of the night to see the shade of Godwin, and hear his voice say, 'Woman, where is Harold?'"

It was impossible for the Earl's strong understanding to resist the arguments addressed to it; and, to say truth, he had been more disturbed than he liked to confess by Edward's sinister forewarnings. Yet, on the other hand, there were reasons against his acquiescence in Gurth's proposal. The primary, and to do him justice, the strongest, was in his native courage and his generous pride. Should he for the first time in his life shrink from a peril in the discharge of his duty; a peril, too, so uncertain and vague? Should he suffer Gurth to fulfil the pledge he himself had taken? And granting even that Gurth were safe from whatever danger he individually might incur, did it become him to accept the proxy? Would Gurth's voice, too, be as potent as his own in effecting the return of the hostages?

The next reasons that swayed him were those he could not avow. In clearing his way to the English throne, it would be of no mean importance to secure the friendship of the Norman Duke, and the Norman acquiescence in his protensions; it would be of infinite service to remove those prepossessions against his House which were still rife with the Normans, who retained a bitter remembrance of their countrymen decimated,* it was said, with the concurrence if not at the order of Godwin, when they accompanied the ill-fated Alfred to the English shore, and who were yet sore with their old expulsion from the English court at the return of his father and himself.

Though it could not enter into his head that William, possessing no party whatever in England, could himself aspire to the English crown, yet at Edward's death there might be pretenders whom the Norman arms could find ready excuse to sanction. There was the boy Atheling, on the one side, there was the valiant Norwegian King Hardrada on the other, who might revive the claims of his predecessor Magnus as heir to the rights of Canute. So near and so formidable a neighbor as the Count of the Normans, every object of policy led him to propitiate; and Gurth, with his unbending hate of all that was Norman, was not, at least, the most politic envoy he could select for that end. Add to this, that despite their present reconciliation, Harold could never long count upon amity with Tostig; and Tostig's connection with William, through their marriages into the House of Baldwin, was full of

* The word "decimated" is the one generally applied by the historians to the massacre in question; and it is therefore retained here. But it is not correctly applied; for that butchery was perpetrated, not upon one out of ten, but nine out of ten.

danger to a new throne, to which Tostig would probably be the most turbulent subject: the influence of this connection how desirable to counteract! *

Nor could Harold, who, as patriot and statesman, felt deeply the necessity of reform and regeneration in the decayed edifice of the English monarchy, willingly lose an occasion to witness all that William had done to raise so high in renown and civilization, in martial fame and commercial prosperity, that petty duchy, which he had placed on a level with the kingdoms of the Teuton and the Frank. Lastly, the Normans were the special darlings of the Roman church. William had obtained the dispensation to his own marriage with Matilda; and might not the Norman influence, duly conciliated, back the prayer which Harold trusted one day to address to the pontiff, and secure to him the hallowed blessing, without which ambition lost its charm, and even a throne its splendor?

All these considerations, therefore, urged the Earl to persist in his original purpose; but a warning voice in his heart, more powerful than all, sided with he prayer of Githa, and the arguments of Gurth. In this state of irresolution, Gurth said seasonably,—

"Bethink thee, Harold, if menaced but with peril to thyself, thou wouldst have a brave man's right to resist us; but it was of 'great evil to England' that Edward spoke, and thy reflection must tell thee, that in this crisis of our country, danger to thee is evil to England—evil to England thou hast no right to incur."

"Dear mother, and generous Gurth," said Harold, then joining the two in one embrace, "ye have well nigh conquered. Give me but two days to ponder well, and be assured that I will not decide from the rash promptings of an ill-considered judgment."

Farther than this they could not then move the Earl; but Gurth was pleased shortly afterwards to see him depart to Edith, whose fears, from whatever source they sprang, would, he was certain, come in aid of his own pleadings.

But as the Earl rode alone towards the once stately home of the perished Roman, and entered at twilight the darkening forestland, his thoughts were less on Edith than on the Vala, with whom his ambition had more and more connected his soul. Perplexed by his doubts, and left dim in the waning lights of human reason, never more involuntarily did he fly to some guide to interpret the future, and decide his path.

As if fate itself responded to the cry of his heart, he suddenly came in sight of Hilda herself, gathering leaves from elm and ash amidst the woodland. He sprang from his horse and approached her.

"Hilda," said he, in a low but firm voice, "thou hast often told me that the dead can advise the living. Raise thou the Scin-læca of the hero of old—raise the Ghost, which mine eye, or my fancy, beheld before, vast and dim by the silent bautastein, and I will stand by thy side. Fain would I know if thou hast deceived me and thyself; or if, in truth, to man's guidance Heaven doth vouchsafe saga and rede from those who have passed into the secret shores of Eternity."

"The dead," answered Hilda, "will not reveal themselves to eyes uninitiate save at their own will, uncompelled by charm and rune. To me their forms can appear distinct through the airy flame; to me, duly prepared by spells that purge the eye of the spirit, and loosen the walls of the flesh. I cannot say that what I see in the trance and the travail of my soul, thou also wilt behold; for even when the vision hath passed from my sight, and the voice from my ear, only memories, confused and dim, of what I saw and heard, remain to guide the waking and common life. But thou shalt stand by my side while I invoke the phantom, and hear and interpret the words which rush from my lips, and the runes that take meaning from the sparks of the charmed fire. I knew ere thou camest, by the darkness and trouble of Edith's soul, that some shade from the Ash-tree of Life had fallen upon thine."

Then Harold related what had passed, and placed before Hilda the doubts that beset him. The Prophetess listened with earnest

* The *above* reasons for Harold's memorable expedition are sketched at this length, because they suggest the most probable motives which induced it, and furnish, in no rash and inconsiderate policy, that key to his visit, which is not to be found in chronicler or historian.

attention; but her mind, when not under its more mystic influences, being strongly biassed by its natural courage and ambition, she saw at a glance all the advantages towards securing the throne predestined to Harold, which might be effected by his visit to the Norman court, and she held in too great disdain both the worldly sense and the mystic reveries of the monkish king (for the believer in Odin was naturally incredulous of the visitation of the Christian saints) to attach much weight to his dreary predictions.

The short reply she made was therefore not calculated to deter Harold from the expedition in dispute. But she deferred till the following night, and to wisdom more dread than her own, the counsels that should sway his decision.

With a strange satisfaction at the thought that he should, at least, test personally the reality of those assumptions of preternatural power which had of late colored his resolves and oppressed his heart, Harold then took leave of the Vala, who returned mechanically to her employment; and, leading his horse by the rein, slowly continued his musing way towards the green knoll and its heathen ruins. But ere he gained the hillock, and while his thoughtful eyes were bent on the ground, he felt his arm seized tenderly—turned—and beheld Edith's face full of unutterable and anxious love.

With that love, indeed, there was blended so much wistfulness, so much fear, that Harold exclaimed,—

"Soul of my soul, what hath chanced? what affects thee thus?"

"Hath no danger befallen thee?" asked Edith falteringly, and gazing on his face with wistful, searching eyes.

"Danger! none, sweet trembler," answered the Earl, evasively.

Edith dropped her eager looks, and clinging to his arm, drew him on silently into the forest land. She paused at last where the old fantastic trees shut out the view of the ancient ruins; and when, looking round, she saw not those gray gigantic shafts which mortal hand seemed never to have piled together, she breathed more freely.

"Speak to me," then said Harold, bending his face to hers; "why this silence?"

"Ah Harold!" answered his betrothed, "thou knowest that ever since we have loved one another, my existence hath been but a shadow of thine; by some weird and strange mystery, which Hilda would explain by the stars or the fates, that have made me a part of thee, I know by the lightness or gloom of my own spirit when good or ill shall befall thee. How often, in thine absence, hath a joy suddenly broke upon me; and I felt by that joy, as by the smile of a good angel, that thou hadst passed safe through some peril, or triumphed over some foe! And now thou askest me why I am so sad:—I can only answer thee by saying, that the sadness is cast upon me by some thunder gloom on thine own destiny."

Harold had sought Edith to speak of his meditated journey, but seeing her dejection he did not dare; so he drew her to his breast and chid her soothingly for her vain apprehensions. But Edith would not be comforted; there seemed something weighing on her mind and struggling to her lips, not accounted for merely by sympathetic forebodings; and at length, as he pressed her to tell all, she gathered courage and spoke,—

"Do not mock me," she said, "but what secret, whether of vain folly or of meaning fate, should I hold from thee? All this day I struggled in vain against the heaviness of my forebodings. How I hailed the sight of Gurth thy brother! I besought him to seek thee—thou hast seen him."

"I have!" said Harold. "But thou wert about to tell me of something more than this dejection."

"Well," resumed Edith, "after Gurth left me, my feet sought involuntarily the hill on which we have met so often. I sate down near the old tomb, a strange weariness crept on my eyes, and a sleep that seemed not wholly sleep fell over me. I struggled against it, as if conscious of some coming terror; and as I struggled, and ere I slept, Harold,—yes, ere I slept,—I saw distinctly a pale and glimmering figure rise from the Saxon's grave. I saw—I see it still! Oh, that livid front, those glassy eyes!"

"The figure of a warrior?" said Harold, startled.

"Of a warrior, armed as in the ancient days, armed like the warrior that Hilda's

maids are working for thy banner. I saw it; and in one hand it held a spear, and in the other a crown."

"A crown!—Say on, say on."

"I saw no more; sleep, in spite of myself, fell on me, a sleep full of confused and painful—rapid and shapeless images, till at last this dream rose clear. I beheld a bright and starry shape, that seemed as a spirit, yet wore thine aspect, standing on a rock; and an angry torrent rolled between the rock and the dry safe land. The waves began to invade the rock, and the spirit unfurled its wings as to flee. And then foul things climed up from the slime of the rock, and descended from the mists of the troubled skies, and they coiled round the wings and clogged them.

"Then a voice cried in my ear,—'Seest thou not on the perilous rock the Soul of Harold the Brave?—seest thou not that the waters engulf it, if the wings fail to flee? Up, Truth, whose strength is in purity, whose image is woman, and aid the soul of the brave!' I sought to spring to thy side; but I was powerless, and behold, close beside me, through my sleep as through a veil, appeared the shafts of the ruined temple in which I lay reclined. And, methought, I saw Hilda sitting alone by the Saxon's grave, and pouring from a crystal vessel black drops into a human heart which she held in her hands: and out of that heart grew a child, and out of that child a youth, with dark mournful brow. And the youth stood by thy side and whispered to thee: and from his lips there came a reeking smoke, and in that smoke as in a blight the wings withered up. And I heard the Voice say,—'Hilda, it is thou that hast destroyed the good angel, and reared from the poisoned heart the loathsome tempter?' And I cried aloud, but it was too late; the waves swept over thee, and above the waves there floated an iron helmet, and on the helmet was a golden crown—the crown I had seen in the hand of the spectre!"

"But this is no evil dream, my Edith," said Harold gaily.

Edith, unheeding him, continued,—

"I started from my sleep. The sun was still high—the air lulled and windless. Then through the shafts and down the hill there glided in that clear waking daylight, a grisly shape like that which I have heard our maidens say the witch-hags, sometimes seen in the forest, assume; yet in truth, it seemed neither of man nor woman. It turned its face once towards me, and on that hideous face were the glee and hate of a triumphant fiend. Oh, Harold, what should all this portend?"

"Hast thou not asked thy kinswoman, the diviner of dreams?"

"I asked Hilda, and she, like thee, only murmured 'The Saxon crown!' But if there be faith in those airy children of the night, surely, O adored one, the vision forebodes danger, not to life, but to soul; and the words I heard seemed to say that thy wings were thy valor, and the Fylgia thou hadst lost was,—no, *that* were impossible—"

"That my Fylgia was TRUTH, which losing, I were indeed lost to thee. Thou dost well," said Harold, loftily, "to hold *that* among the lies of the fancy. All else may, perchance, desert me, but never mine own free soul. Self-reliant hath Hilda called me in mine earlier days, and—wherever fate casts me,—in my truth, and my love, and my dauntless heart, I dare both man and the fiend."

Edith gazed a moment in devout admiration on the mien of her hero-lover, then she drew close and closer to his breast, consoled and believing.

CHAPTER V.

WITH all her persuasion of her own powers in penetrating the future, we have seen that Hilda had never consulted her oracles on the fate of Harold, without a dark and awful sense of the ambiguity of their responses. That fate, involving the mightiest interest of a great race, and connected with events operating on the farthest times and the remotest lands, lost itself to her prophetic ken amidst omens the most contradictory, shadows and lights the most conflicting, meshes the most entangled. Her human heart, devotedly attached to the Earl through her love for Edith,—her pride obstinately bent on securing to the last daughter of her

princely race that throne, which all her vaticinations, even when most gloomy, assured her was destined to the man with whom Edith's doom was interwoven, combined to induce her to the most favorable interpretation of all that seemed sinister and doubtful. But according to the tenets of that peculiar form of magic cultivated by Hilda, the comprehension became obscured by whatever partook of human sympathy. It was a magic wholly distinct from the malignant witchcraft more popularly known to us, and which was equally common to the Germanic and Scandinavian heathens.

The magic of Hilda was rather akin to the old Cimbrian Alirones, or sacred prophetesses; and, as with them, it demanded the *priestess*,—that is, the person without human ties or emotions, a spirit clear as a mirror, upon which the great images of destiny might be cast untroubled.

However the natural gifts and native character of Hilda might be perverted by the visionary and delusive studies habitual to her, there was in her very infirmities a grandeur, not without its pathos. In this position which she had assumed between the earth and the heaven, she stood so solitary and in such chilling air,—all the doubts that beset her lonely and daring soul came in such gigantic forms of terror and menace !—On the verge of the mighty Heathenesse sinking fast into the night of ages, she towered amidst the shades, a shade herself; and round her gathered the last demons of the Dire Belief, defying the march of their luminous foe, and concentring round their mortal priestess, the wrecks of their horrent empire over a world redeemed.

All the night that succeeded her last brief conference with Harold, the Vala wandered through the wild forest land, seeking haunts or employed in collecting herbs, hallowed to her dubious yet solemn lore; and the last stars were receding into the cold gray skies, when, returning homeward, she beheld within the circle of the Druid temple a motionless object, stretched on the ground near the Teuton's grave; she approached, and perceived what seemed a corpse, it was so still and stiff in its repose, and the face upturned to the stars was so haggard and deathlike;—a face horrible to behold; the evidence of extreme age was written on the shrivelled livid skin and the deep furrows, but the expression retained that intense malignity which belongs to a power of life that extreme age rarely knows. The garb, which was that of a remote fashion, was foul and ragged, and neither by the garb, nor by the face, was it easy to guess what was the sex of this seeming corpse. But by a strange and peculiar odor that rose from the form,* and a certain glistening on the face, and the lean folded hands, Hilda knew that the creature was one of those witches, esteemed of all the most deadly and abhorred, who, by the application of certain ointments, were supposed to possess the art of separating soul from body, and, leaving the last as dead, to dismiss the first to the dismal orgies of the *Sabbat*. It was a frequent custom to select for the place of such trances, heathen temples and ancient graves. And Hilda seated herself beside the witch to await the waking. The cock crowed thrice, heavy mists began to arise from the glades, covering the gnarled roots of the forest trees, when the dread face on which Hilda calmly gazed, showed symptons of returning life ! a strong convulsion shook the vague indefinite form under its huddled garments, the eyes opened, closed,—opened again; and what had a few moments before seemed a dead thing, sate up and looked round.

"Wicca," said the Danish prophetess, with an accent between contempt and curiosity, "for what mischief to beast or man hast thou followed the noiseless path of the Dreams through the airs of Night ?"

The creature gazed hard upon the questioner, from its bleared but fiery eyes, and replied slowly, "Hail, Hilda, the Morthwyrtha ! why art thou not of us, why comest thou not to our revels ? Gay sport have we had to-night with Faul and Zabulus;† but gayer far shall our sport be in the wassail hall of Senlac, when thy grandchild shall come in the torchlight to the bridal bed of her lord. A buxom bride is Edith the Fair, and fair looked her face in her sleep on yester noon, when I sate by her side, and breathed on her brow, and murmured the verse that

* See note (*n*) at the end.

† Faul was an evil spirit much dreaded by the Saxons. Zabulus and Diabolus (the Devil) seem to have been the same.

blackens the dream; but fairer still shall she look in her sleep by her lord. Ha! ha! Ho! we shall be there, with Zabulus and Faul; we shall be there!"

"How!" said Hilda, thrilled to learn that the secret ambition she cherished was known to this loathed sister in the art. "How dost thou pretend to that mystery of the future, which is dim and clouded even to me? Canst thou tell when and where the daughter of the Norse kings shall sleep on the breast of her lord?"

A sound that partook of laughter, but was so unearthly in its malignant glee that it seemed not to come from a human lip, answered the Vala; and as the laugh died the witch rose, and said,

"Go and question thy dead, O Morthwyrtha! Thou deemest thyself wiser than we are; we wretched hags, whom the ceorl seeks when his herd has the murrain, or the girl when her false love forsakes her; we, who have no dwelling known to man, but are found at need in the wold or the cave, or the side of dull slimy streams where the murderess-mother hath drowned her babe. Askest thou, O Hilda, the rich and the learned, askest thou counsel and lore from the daughter of Faul?"

"No," answered the Vala haughtily, "not to such as thou, do the great Nornas unfold the future. What knowest thou of the runes of old, whispered by the trunkless skull to the mighty Odin? runes that control the elements, and conjure up the Shining Shadows of the grave. Not with thee will the stars confer; and thy dreams are foul with revelries obscene, not solemn and haunted with the bodements of things to come! Only I marvelled, while I beheld thee on the Saxon's grave, what joy such as thou can find in that life above life, which draws upward the soul of the true Vala."

"The joy," replied the Witch, "the joy which comes from wisdom and power, higher than you ever won with your spells from the rune or the star. Wrath gives the venom to the slaver of the dog, and death to the curse of the Witch. When wilt thou be as wise as the hag thou despisest? When will all the clouds that beset thee roll away from thy ken? When thy hopes are all crushed, when thy passions lie dead, when thy pride is abased, when thou art but a wreck, like the shafts of this temple, through which the starlight can shine. *Then* only, thy soul will see clearly the sense of the runes, and then, thou and I will meet on the verge of the Black Shoreless Sea!"

So, despite all her haughtiness and disdain, did these words startle the lofty Prophetess, that she remained gazing into space long after that fearful apparition had vanished, and up from the grass, which those obscene steps had profaned, sprang the lark carolling.

But ere the sun had dispelled the dews on the forest sward, Hilda had recovered her wonted calm, and, locked within her own secret chamber, prepared the seid and the runes for the invocation of the dead.

CHAPTER VI.

Resolving, should the auguries consulted permit him to depart, to entrust Gurth with the charge of informing Edith, Harold parted from his betrothed, without hint of his suspended designs; and he passed the day in making all preparations for his absence and his journey, promising Gurth to give his final answer on the morrow,—when either himself or his brother should depart for Rouen. But more and more impressed with the arguments of Gurth, and his own sober reason, and somewhat perhaps influenced by the forebodings of Edith (for that mind, once so constitutionally firm, had become tremulously alive to such airy influences), he had almost predetermined to assent to his brother's prayer, when he departed to keep his dismal appointment with the Morthwyrtha. The night was dim but not dark; no moon shone, but the stars, wan though frequent, gleamed pale, as from the farthest deeps of the heaven; clouds gray and fleecy rolled slowly across the welkin, veiling and disclosing, by turns, the melancholy orbs.

The Morthwyrtha, in her dark dress, stood within the circle of stones. She had already kindled a fire at the foot of the bautastein, and its glare shone redly on the gray shafts; playing through their forlorn gaps upon the sward. By her side was a vessel, seemingly of pure water, filled from the old Roman

fountain, and its clear surface flashed blood-red in the beams. Behind them, in a circle round both fire and water, were fragments of bark, cut in a peculiar form, like the head of an arrow, and inscribed with the mystic letters; nine were the fragments, and on each fragment were graved the runes. In her right hand the Morthwyrtha held her seid staff, her feet were bare, and her loins girt by the Hunnish belt inscribed with mystic letters; from the belt hung a pouch or gipsire of bear-skin, with plates of silver. Her face, as Harold entered the circle, had lost its usual calm—it was wild and troubled.

She seemed unconscious of Harold's presence, and her eye, fixed and rigid, was as that of one in a trance. Slowly, as if constrained by some power not her own, she began to move round the ring with a measured pace, and at last her voice broke low, hollow, and internal, into a rugged chaunt, which may be thus imperfectly translated—

" By the Urdar-fount dwelling,
Day by day from the rill,
The Nornas besprinkle
The ash Ygg-drassill.*
The hart bites the buds,
And the snake gnaws the root,
But the eagle all-seeing
Keeps watch on the fruit.

" These drops on thy tomb
From the fountain I pour;
With the rune I invoke thee,
With flame I restore.
Dread Father of men
In the land of thy grave,
Give voice to the Vala,
And light to the Brave."

As she thus chaunted, the Morthwyrtha now sprinkled the drops from the vessel over the bautastein,—now one by one, cast the fragments of bark scrawled with runes on the fire. Then, whether or not some glutinous or other chemical material had been mingled in the water, a pale gleam broke from the grave-stone thus besprinkled, and the whole tomb glistened in the light of the leaping fire. From this light a mist or thin smoke gradually rose, and took, though vaguely, the outline of a vast human form. But so indefinite was the outline to Harold's eye, that gazing on it steadily, and stilling with strong effort his loud heart, he knew not whether it was a phantom or a vapor that he beheld.

The Vala paused, leaning on her staff, and gazing in awe on the glowing stone, while the Earl, with his arms folded on his broad breast, stood hushed and motionless. The sorceress recommenced—

" Mighty Dead, I revere thee,
Dim-shaped from the cloud,
With the light of thy deeds
For the web of thy shroud!

" As Odin consulted
Mimir's skull hollow-eyed,*
Odin's heir comes to seek
In the Phantom a guide."

As the Morthwyrtha ceased, the fire crackled loud, and from its flame flew one of the fragments of bark to the feet of the sorceress:—the runic letters all indented with sparks.

The sorceress uttered a loud cry, which, despite his courage and his natural strong sense, thrilled through the Earl's heart to his marrow and bones, so appalling was it with wrath and terror; and while she gazed aghast on the blazing letters, she burst forth—

" No warrior art thou,
And no child of the tomb;
I know thee, and shudder,
Great Asa of Doom.

" Thou constrainest my lips,
And thou crushest my spell;
Bright Son of the Giant—
Dark Father of Hell!" †

The whole form of the Morthwyrtha then became convulsed and agitated, as if with the tempest of frenzy; the foam gathered to her lips, and her voice rang forth like a shriek—

* *Ygg-drassill*, the mystic Ash-tree of Life, or symbol of the earth, watered by the Fates.—See note (*o*), at the end.

* Mimir, the most celebrated of the giants. The Vaner, with whom he was left as a hostage, cut off his head. Odin embalmed it by his *seid*, or magic art, pronounced over it mystic runes, and, ever after, consulted it on critical occasions.

† Asa-Lok or Loke—(distinct from Utgard-Lok, the demon of the Infernal Regions)—descended from the Giants, but received among the celestial Deities; a treacherous and malignant Power fond of assuming disguises and plotting evil;—corresponding in his attributes with our " Lucifer."—One of his progeny was Hela, the queen of Hell.

"In the Iron Wood rages
The Weaver of Harm,
The giant Blood-drinker
Hag-born MANAGARM.*

"A keel nears the shoal;
From the slime and the mud
Crawl the newt and the adder,
The spawn of the flood.

"Thou stand'st on the rock
Where the dreamer beheld thee.
O soul, spread thy wings,
Ere the glamor hath spell'd thee.

"Oh, dread is the tempter,
And strong the control;
But conquered the tempter,
If firm be the soul!"

The Vala paused; and though it was evident that in her frenzy she was still unconscious of Harold's presence, and seemed but to be the compelled and passive voice to some Power, real or imaginary, beyond her own existence, the proud man approached, and said—

"Firm shall be my soul; nor of the dangers which beset it would I ask the dead or the living. If plain answers to mortal sense can come from these airy shadows or these mystic charms, reply, O interpreter of fate; reply but to the questions I demand. If I go to the court of the Norman, shall I return unscathed?"

The Vala stood rigid as a shape of stone while Harold thus spoke; and her voice came so low and strange as if forced from her scarce-moving lips—

"Thou shalt return unscathed."

"Shall the hostages of Godwin, my father, be released?"

"The hostages of Godwin shall be released," answered the same voice; "the hostage of Harold be retained."

"Wherefore hostage from me?"

"In pledge of alliance with the Norman."

"Ha! then the Norman and Harold shall plight friendship and troth?"

"Yes!" answered the Vala; but this time a visible shudder passed over her rigid form.

"Two questions more, and I have done. The Norman priests have the ear of the Roman Pontiff. Shall my league with William the Norman avail to win me my bride?"

"It will win thee the bride thou wouldst never have wedded but for thy league with William the Norman. Peace with thy questions, peace!" continued the voice, trembling as with some fearful struggle; "for it is the Demon that forces my words, and they wither my soul to speak them."

"But one question more remains; shall I live to wear the crown of England; and if so, when shall I be a king?"

At these words the face of the prophetess kindled, the fire suddenly leapt up higher and brighter; again, vivid sparks lighted the runes on the fragments of bark that were shot from the flame; over these last the Morthwyrtha bowed her head, and then, lifting it, triumphantly burst once more into song.

"When the Wolf Month,* grim and still,
Heaps the snow-mass on the hill;
When, through white air sharp and bitter,
Mocking sunbeams freeze and glitter;
When the ice-gems bright and barbed,
Deck the boughs the leaves had garbed;
Then the measure shall be meted,
And the circle be completed.
Cerdic's race, the Thor-descended,
In the Monk-king's tomb be ended;
And no Saxon brow but thine
Wear the crown of Woden's line.

"Where thou wendest, wend unfearing,
Every step thy throne is nearing.
Fraud may plot, and force assail thee,—
Shall the soul thou trustest fail thee?
If it fail thee, scornful hearer,
Still the throne shines near and nearer.
Guile with guile oppose, and never
Crown and brow shall Force dissever:
Till the dead men unforgiving
Loose the war steeds on the living;
Till a sun whose race is ending
Sees the rival stars contending,
Where the dead men unforgiving,
Wheel the war-steeds round the living.

"Where thou wendest, wend unfearing;
Every step thy throne is nearing.
Never shall thy House decay,
Nor thy sceptre pass away,
While the Saxon name endureth
In the land thy throne secureth;

* "A hag dwells in a wood called Jamvid, the Iron Wood, the mother of many gigantic sons shaped like wolves; there is one of a race more fearful than all, named 'Managarm.' He will be filled with the blood of men who draw near their end, and will swallow up the moon and stain the heavens and the earth with blood."—From the *Prose Edda*. In the Scandinavian poetry, Managarm is sometimes the symbol of *war*, and the "Iron Wood" a metaphor for *spears*.

* Wolf Month, January.

Saxon name and throne together,
Leaf and root, shall wax and wither;
So the measure shall be meted,
And the circle close completed.

"Art thou answered, dauntless seeker?
Go, thy bark shall ride the breaker,
Every billow high and higher,
Waft thee up to thy desire;
And a force beyond thine own,
Drift and strand thee on the throne.

"When the Wolf Month, grim and still,
Piles the snow-mass on the hill,
In the white air sharp and bitter
Shall thy kingly sceptre glitter:
When the ice-gems barb the bough
Shall the jewels clasp thy brow;
Winter-wind, the oak uprending,
With the altar-anthem blending;
Wind shall howl, and mone shall sing,
'Hail to Harold—HAIL THE KING!'"

An exultation that seemed more than human, so intense it was, and so solemn,—thrilled in the voice which thus closed predictions that seemed signally to belie the more vague and menacing warnings with which the dreary incantation had commenced. The Morthwyrtha stood erect and stately, still gazing on the pale blue flame that rose from the burial stone, till slowly the flame waned and paled, and at last died with a sudden flicker, leaving the gray tomb standing forth all weather-worn and desolate, while a wind rose from the north, and sighed through the roofless columns. Then as the light over the grave expired, Hilda gave a deep sigh, and fell to the ground senseless.

Harold lifted his eyes towards the stars and murmured—

"If it be a sin, as the priests say, to pierce the dark walls which surround us here, and read the future in the dim world beyond, why gavest thou, O Heaven, the reason, never resting, save when it explores? Why hast thou set in the heart the mystic Law of Desire, ever toiling to the High, ever grasping at the Far?"

Heaven answered not the unquiet soul. The clouds passed to and fro in ther wanderings, the wind still sighed through the hollow stones, the fire shot with vain sparks towards the distant stars. In the cloud and the wind and the fire couldst thou read no answer from Heaven, unquiet soul?

The next day, with a gallant company, the falcon on his wrist,* the sprightly hound gambolling before his steed, blithe of heart and high in hope, Earl Harold took his way to the Norman court.

* Bayeux tapestry.

BOOK THE NINTH.

THE BONES OF THE DEAD.

CHAPTER I.

WILLIAM, Count of the Normans, sate in a fair chamber of his palace of Rouen; and on the large table before him were ample evidences of the various labors, as warrior, chief, thinker, and statesman, which filled the capacious breadth of that sleepless mind.

There, lay a plan of the new port of Cherbourg, and beside it an open MS. of the Duke's favorite book, the Commentaries of Cæsar, from which, it is said, he borrowed some of the tactics of his own martial science; marked, and dotted, and interlined with his large bold handwriting, were the words of the great Roman. A score or so of long arrows, which had received some skilful improvement in feather or bolt, lay carelessly scattered over some architectural sketches of a new Abbey Church, and the proposed charter for its endowment. An open cyst, of the beautiful workmanship for which the English goldsmiths were then pre-eminently renowned, that had been among the parting gifts of Edward, contained letters from the various potentates near and far, who sought his alliance or menaced his repose.

On a perch behind him sate his favorite Norway falcon, unhooded, for it had been taught the finest polish in its dainty education,—viz., "to face company undisturbed." At a kind of easel at the farther end of the hall, a dwarf, misshapen in limbs, but of a face singularly acute and intelligent, was employed in the outline of that famous action at Val des Dunes, which had been the scene of one of the most brilliant of William's feats in arms—an outline intended to be transferred to the notable "stitchwork' of Matilda the Duchess.

Upon the floor, playing with a huge boar hound of English bred, that seemed but ill to like the play, and every now and then snarled and showed his white teeth, was a young boy, with something of the Duke's features, but with an expression more open and less sagacious; and something of the Duke's broad build of chest and shoulder, but without promise of the Duke's stately stature, which was needed to give grace and dignity to a strength otherwise cumbrous and graceless. And indeed, since William's visit to England, his athletic shape had lost much of its youthful symmetry, though not yet deformed by that corpulence which was a disease almost as rare in the Norman as the Spartan. Nevertheless, what is a defect in the gladiator is often but a beauty in the prince; and the Duke's large proportions filled the eye with a sense both of regal majesty and physical power. His countenance, yet more than his form, showed the work of time; the short dark hair was worn into partial baldness at the temples by the habitual friction of the casque, and the constant indulgence of wily stratagem and ambitious craft had deepened the wrinkles round the plotting eye and the firm mouth: so that it was only by an effort like that of an actor, that his aspect regained the knightly and noble frankness it had once worn. The accomplished prince was no longer, in truth, what the bold warrior had been,—he was greater in state and less in soul. And already, despite all his grand qualities as a ruler, his imperious nature had betrayed signs of what he (whose constitutional sternness the Nor-

man freemen, not without effort, curbed into the limits of justice), might become, if wider scope were afforded to his fiery passions and unsparing will.

Before the Duke, who was leaning his chin on his hand, stood Mallet de Graville, speaking earnestly, and his discourse seemed both to interest and please his lord.

"Eno'!" said William, "I comprehend the nature of the land and its men,—a land that, untaught by experience, and persuaded that a peace of twenty or thirty years must last till the crack of doom, neglects all its defences, and has not one fort, save Dover, between the coast and the capital,—a land which must be won or lost by a single battle, and men (here the Duke hesitated), and *men*," he resumed with a sigh, "whom it will be so hard to conquer, that, *pardex*, I don't wonder they neglect their fortresses. Enough, I say, of them. Let us return to Harold,—thou thinkest, then, that he is worthy of his fame?"

"He is almost the only Englishman I have seen," answered De Graville, "who hath received scholarly rearing and nurture; and all his faculties are so evenly balanced, and all accompanied by so composed a calm, that methinks, when I look at and hear him, I contemplate some artful castle,—the strength of which can never be known at the first glance, nor except by those who assail it."

"Thou art mistaken, Sire de Graville," said the Duke, with a shrewd and cunning twinkle of his luminous dark eyes. "For thou tellest me that he hath no thought of my pretensions to the English throne,—that he inclines willingly to thy suggestions to come himself to my court for the hostages,—that, in a word, he is not suspicious."

"Certes, he is not suspicious," returned Mallet.

"And thinkest thou that an artful castle were worth much without warder or sentry,—or a cultivated mind strong and safe, without its watchman,—Suspicion?"

"Truly, my lord speaks well and wisely," said the knight, startled: "but Harold is a man thoroughly English, and the English are a *gens* the least suspecting of any created thing between an angel and a sheep."

William laughed aloud. But his laugh was checked suddenly; for at that moment a fierce yell smote his ears, and looking hastily up, he saw his hound and his son rolling together on the ground, in a grapple that seemed deadly.

William sprang to the spot; but the boy, who was then under the dog, cried out,—"*Laissez aller! Laissez aller!* no rescue! I will master my own foe;" and so saying, with a vigorous effort he gained his knee, and with both hands griped the hound's throat, so that the beast twisted in vain, to and fro, with gnashing jaws, and in another minute would have panted out its last.

"I may save my good hound now," said William, with the gay smile of his earlier days, and, though not without some exertion of his prodigious strength, he drew the dog from his son's grasp.

"That was ill done, father," said Robert, surnamed even then the *Courthose*, "to take part with thy son's foe."

"But my son's foe is thy father's property, my *vaillant*," said the Duke; "and thou must answer to me for treason in provoking quarrel and feud with my own four-footed vavasour."

"It is not thy property, father; thou gavest the dog to me when a whelp."

"Fables, *Monseigneur de Courthose;* I lent it to thee but for a day, when thou hadst put out thine ankle bone in jumping off the rampire; and all maimed as thou wert, thou hadst still malice enow in thee to worry the poor beast into a fever."

"Gave or lent, it is the same thing, father; what I have once, that will I hold, as thou didst before me, in thy cradle."

Then the great Duke, who in his own house was the fondest and weakest of men, was so doltish and doting as to take the boy in his arms and kiss him,—nor, with all his far-sighted sagacity, deemed he that in that kiss lay the seed of the awful curse that grew up from a father's agony, to end in a son's misery and perdition.

Even Mallet de Graville frowned at the sight of the sire's infirmity,—even Turold the dwarf shook his head. At that moment an officer entered, and announced that an English nobleman, apparently in great haste (for his horse had dropped down dead as he dismounted), had arrived at the palace, and

craved instant audience of the Duke. William put down the boy, gave the brief order for the stranger's admission, and, punctilious in ceremonial, beckoning De Graville to follow him, passed at once into the next chamber, and seated himself on his chair of state.

In a few moments one of the seneschals of the palace ushered in a visitor, whose long moustache at once proclaimed him Saxon, and in whom De Graville with surprise recognized his old friend, Godrith. The young thegn, with a reverence more hasty than that to which William was accustomed, advanced to the foot of the dais, and, using the Norman language, said, in a voice thick with emotion—

"From Harold the Earl, greeting to thee, *Monseigneur*. Most foul and unchristian wrong hath been done the Earl by thy liegeman, Guy, Count of Ponthieu. Sailing hither in two barks from England, with intent to visit thy court, storm and wind drove the Earl's vessels towards the mouth of the Somme;* there landing, and without fear, as in no hostile country, he and his train were seized by the count himself, and cast into prison in the Castle of Belrem.† A dungeon fit but for malefactors, holds, while I speak, the first lord of England, and brother-in-law to its king. Nay, hints of famine, torture, and death itself, have been darkly thrown out by this most disloyal count, whether in earnest, or with the base view of heightening ransom. At length, wearied perhaps by the Earl's firmness and disdain, this traitor of Ponthieu hath permitted me in the Earl's behalf to bear the message of Harold. He came to thee as to a prince and a friend: sufferest thou thy liegeman to detain him as a thief or a foe?"

"Noble Englishman," replied William, gravely, "this is a matter more out of my cognizance than thou seemest to think. It is true that Guy, Count of Ponthieu, holds fief under me, but I have no control over the laws of his realm. And by those laws, he hath right of life and death over all stranded and waifed on his coast. Much grieve I for the mishap of your famous Earl, and what I can do, I will; but I can only treat in this matter with Guy as prince with prince, not as lord to vassal. Meanwhile I pray you to take rest and food; and I will seek prompt counsel as to the measures to adopt."

The Saxon's face showed disappointment and dismay at this answer, so different from what he had expected: and he replied with the natural honest bluntness which all his younger affection of Norman manners had never eradicated—

"Food will I not touch, nor wine drink, till thou, Lord Count, hast decided what help, as noble to noble, Christian to Christian, man to man, thou givest to him who has come into this peril solely from his trust in thee."

"Alas!" said the grand dissimulator, "heavy is the responsibility with which thine ignorance of our land, laws, and men would charge me. If I take but one false step in this matter, woe indeed to thy lord! Guy is hot and haughty, and in his *droits;* he is capable of sending me the Earl's head in reply to too dure a request for his freedom. Much treasure and broad lands will it cost me, I fear, to ransom the Earl. But be cheered; half my duchy were not too high a price for thy lord's safely. Go, then, and eat with a good heart, and drink to the Earl's health with a hopeful prayer."

"An it please you, my lord," said De Graville, "I know this gentle thegn, and will beg of you the grace to see to his entertainment, and sustain his spirits."

"Thou shalt, but later; so noble a guest none but my chief seneschal should be the first to honor." Then turning to the officer in waiting, he bade him lead the Saxon to the chamber tenanted by William Fitzosborne (who then lodged within the palace), and committed him to that Count's care.

As the Saxon sullenly withdrew; and as the door closed on him, William rose and strode to and fro the room exultingly.

"I have him! I have him!" he cried aloud; "not as free guest, but as ransomed captive. I have him—the Earl!—I have him! Go, Mallet, my friend, now seek this sour-looking Englishman; and, hark thee! fill his ear with all the tales thou canst think of as to Guy's cruelty and ire. Enforce all the difficulties that lie in my way towards the Earl's delivery. Great make the danger of the Earl's capture, and vast all the favor of release. Comprehendest thou?"

* Roman de Rou. See Part ii. 1078.

† *Belrem*, the present Beaurain, near Montreuil.

"I am Norman, *Monseigneur*," replied De Graville, with a slight smile; "and we Normans can make a short mantle cover a large space. You will not be displeased with my address."

"Go, then—go," said William, "and send me forthwith—Lanfranc—no, hold—not Lanfranc, he is too scrupulous; Fitzosborne—no, too haughty. Go, first, to my brother, Odo of Bayeux, and pray him to seek me on the instant."

The knight bowed and vanished, and William continued to pace the room, with sparkling eyes and murmuring lips.

CHAPTER II.

Not till after repeated messages, at first without talk of ransom, and in high tone, affected, no doubt, by William to spin out the negotiations, and augment the value of his services, did Guy of Ponthieu consent to release his illustrious captive,—the guerdon, a large sum and *un bel maneir* * on the river Eaulne. But whether that guerdon were the fair ransom-fee, or the price for concerted snare, no man now can say, and sharper than ours the wit that forms the more likely guess. These stipulations effected, Guy himself opened the doors of the dungeon; and affecting to treat the whole matter as one of law and right, now happily and fairly settled, was as courteous and debonnair as he had before been dark and menacing.

He even himself, with a brilliant train, accompanied Harold to the *Chateau d'Eu*,† whither William journeyed to give him the meeting; and laughed with a gay grace at the Earl's short and scornful replies to his compliments and excuses. At the gates of this chateau, not famous, in after times, for the good faith of its lords, William himself, laying aside all the pride of etiquette which he had established at his court, came to receive his visitor; and aiding him to dismount embraced him cordially, amidst a loud fanfaron of fifes and trumpets.

The flower of that glorious nobility, which a few generations had sufficed to rear out of the lawless pirates of the Baltic, had been selected to do honor alike to guest and host.

There were Hugo de Montfort, and Roger de Beaumont, famous in council as in the field, and already gray with fame. There was Henri, Sire de Ferrers, whose name is supposed to have arisen from the vast forges that burned around his castle, on the anvils of which were welded the arms impenetrable in every field. There was Raoul de Tancarville, the old tutor of William, hereditary Chamberlain of the Norman Counts; and Geoffroi de Mandeville, and Tonstain the Fair, whose name still preserved, amidst the general corruption of appellations, the evidence of his Danish birth; and Hugo de Grantmesnil, lately returned from exile; and Humphrey de Bohun, whose old castle in Carcutan may yet be seen; and St. John, and Lacie, and D'Aincourt, of broad lands between the Maine and the Oise; and William de Montfichet, and Roger, nicknamed "Bigod," and Roger de Mortemer; and many more, whose fame lives in another land than that of Neustria! There, too, were the chief prelates and abbots of a church that since William's accession had risen into repute with Rome and with Learning, unequalled on this side the Alps; their white aubes over their gorgeous robes; Lanfranc, and the Bishop of Coutance, and the Abbot of Bec, and foremost of all in rank, but not in learning, Odo of Bayeux.

So great the assemblage of Quens and prelates, that there was small room in the court-yard for the lesser knights and chiefs, who yet hustled each other, with loss of Norman dignity, for a sight of the lion which guarded England. And still, amidst all those men of mark and might, Harold, simple and calm, looked as he had looked on his war-ship in the Thames, the man who could lead them all!

From those, indeed, who were fortunate enough to see him as he passed up by the side of William, as tall as the Duke, and no less erect—of far slighter bulk, but with a strength almost equal, to a practised eye, in his compacter symmetry and more supple grace,—from those who saw him thus, an admiring murmur rose; for no men in the world so valued and cultivated personal advantages as the Norman knighthood.

* Roman de Rou, part ii. 1079.

† William of Poitiers, "apud Aucense Castrum."

Conversing easily with Harold, and well watching him while he conversed, the Duke led his guest into a private chamber in the third floor* of the castle, and in that chamber were Haco and Wolnoth.

"This, I trust, is no surprise to you," said the Duke, smiling; "and now I shall but mar your commune." So saying, he left the room, and Wolnoth rushed to his brother's arms, while Haco, more timidly, drew near and touched the Earl's robe.

As soon as the first joy of the meeting was over, the Earl said to Haco, whom he had drawn to his breast with an embrace as fond as that bestowed on Wolnoth,—

"Remembering thee a boy, I came to say to thee, 'Be my son;' but seeing thee a man, I change the prayer;—supply thy father's place, and be my brother! And thou, Wolnoth, hast thou kept thy word to me? Norman is thy garb, in truth; is thy heart still English?"

"Hist!" whispered Haco; "hist! We have a proverb, that walls have ears."

"But Norman walls can hardly understand our broad Saxon of Kent, I trust," said Harold, smiling, though with a shade on his brow.

"True; continue to speak Saxon," said Haco, "and we are safe."

"Safe!" echoed Harold.

"Haco's fears are childish, my brother," said Wolnoth, "and he wrongs the Duke."

"Not the Duke, but the policy which surrounds him like an atmosphere," exclaimed Haco. "Oh, Harold, generous indeed wert thou to come hither for thy kinsfolk—generous! But for England's weal, better that we had rotted out our lives in exile, ere thou, hope and prop of England, set foot in these webs of wile."

"Tut!" said Wolnoth, impatiently; "good is it for England that the Norman and Saxon should be friends."

Harold, who had lived to grow as wise in men's hearts as his father, save when the natural trustfulness that lay under his calm reserve lulled his sagacity, turned his eye steadily on the faces of his two kinsmen; and he saw at the first glance that a deeper intellect and a graver temper than Wolnoth's fair face betrayed, characterized the dark eye and serious brow of Haco. He therefore drew his nephew a little aside, and said to him,—

"Forewarned is forearmed. Deemest thou that this fair-spoken Duke will dare aught against my life?"

"Life, no; liberty, yes."

Harold started, and those strong passions native to his breast, but usually curbed beneath his majestic will, heaved in his bosom, and flashed in his eye.

"Liberty!—let him dare! Though all his troops paved the way from his court to his coasts, I would hew my way through their ranks."

"Deemest thou that I am a coward?" said Haco, simply, "yet contrary to all law and justice, and against King Edward's well-known remonstrance, hath not the Count detained me years, yea, long years, in his land? Kind are his words, wily his deeds. Fear not force; fear fraud."

"I fear neither," answered Harold, drawing himself up, "nor do I repent me one moment—No! nor did I repent in the dungeon of that felon Count, whom God grant me life to repay with fire and sword for his treason—that I myself have come hither to demand my kinsmen. I come in the name of England, strong in her might, and sacred in her majesty."

Before Haco could reply, the door opened, and Raoul de Tancarville, as Grand Chamberlain, entered, with all Harold's Saxon train, and a goodly number of Norman squires and attendants, bearing rich vestures.

The noble bowed to the Earl with his country's polished courtesy, and besought leave to lead him to the bath, while his own squires prepared his raiment for the banquet to be held in his honor. So all further conference with his young kinsmen was then suspended.

The Duke, who affected a state no less regal than that of the Court of France, permitted no one, save his own family and guests, to sit at his own table. His great officers (those imperious lords) stood beside his chair; and William Fitzosborne, "the Proud Spirit," placed on the board with his own hand the dainty dishes for which the

* As soon as the rude fort of the middle ages admitted something of magnificence and display, the state rooms were placed in the third story of the inner court, as being the most secure.

Norman cooks were renowned. And great men were those Norman cooks; and often for some "delicate," more ravishing than wont, gold chain and gem, and even "*bel maneir*," fell to their guerdon.* It was worth being a cook in those days!

The most seductive of men was William in his fair moods; and he lavished all the witcheries at his control upon his guest. If possible, yet more gracious was Matilda the Duchess. This woman, eminent for mental culture, for personal beauty, and for a spirit and an ambition no less great than her lord's, knew well how to choose such subjects of discourse as might most flatter an English ear. Her connection with Harold, through her sister's marriage with Tostig, warranted a familiarity almost caressing, which she assumed towards the comely Earl; and she insisted, with a winning smile, that all the hours the Duke would leave at his disposal he must spend with her.

The banquet was enlivened by the song of the great Taillefer himself, who selected a theme that artfully flattered alike the Norman and the Saxon; viz. the aid given by Rolf-ganger to Athelstan, and the alliance between the English King and the Norman founder. He dexterously introduced into the song praises of the English, and the value of their friendship; and the Countess significantly applauded each gallant compliment to the land of the famous guest. If Harold was pleased by such poetic courtesies, he was yet more surprised by the high honor in which Duke, baron, and prelate evidently held the Poet: for it was among the worst signs of that sordid spirit, honoring only wealth, which had crept over the original character of the Anglo-Saxon, that the bard, or scop, with them, had sunk into great disrepute, and it was even forbidden to ecclesiastics † to admit such landless vagrants to their company.

Much, indeed, there was in that court which, even on the first day, Harold saw to admire—that stately temperance, so foreign to English excesses (but which, alas, the Norman kept not long when removed to another soil)—that methodical state and noble pomp which characterized the Feudal system, linking so harmoniously prince to peer, and peer to knight—the easy grace, the polished wit of the courtiers—the wisdom of Lanfranc, and the higher ecclesiastics, blending worldly lore with decorous, not pedantic, regard to their sacred calling—the enlightened love of music, letters, song, and art, which colored the discourse both of Duke and Duchess and the younger courtiers, prone to emulate high example, whether for ill or good—all impressed Harold with a sense of civilization and true royalty, which at once saddened and inspired his musing mind—saddened him when he thought how far behind-hand England was in much, with this comparatively petty principality—inspired him when he felt what one great chief can do for his native land.

The unfavorable impressions made upon his thoughts by Haco's warnings could scarcely fail to yield beneath the prodigal courtesies lavished upon him, and the frank openness with which William laughingly excused himself for having so long detained the hostages, "in order, my guest, to make thee come and fetch them. And, by St. Valery, now thou art here, thou shalt not depart, till, at least, thou hast lost in gentler memories, the recollection of the scurvy treatment thou hast met from that barbarous Count. Nay, never bite thy lip, Harold, my friend, leave to me thy revenge upon Guy. Sooner or later, the very *maneir* he hath extorted from me shall give excuse for sword and lance, and then, *pardex*, thou shalt come and cross steel in thine own quarrel. How I rejoice that I can show to the *beau frère* of my dear cousin and seigneur some return for all the courtesies the English King and kingdom bestowed upon me! To-morrow we will ride to Rouen; there, all knightly sports shall be held to grace thy coming; and by St. Michael, knight-saint of the Norman, nought less will content me than to have thy great name in the list of my chosen *chevaliers*. But the night wears now, and thou sure must need sleep;" and, thus talking, the Duke himself led the way to Harold's chamber, and insisted on removing the *ouche* from his robe of state. As he did so, he passed his hand, as if carelessly, along the Earl's right arm. "Ha!" said he

* A manor (but not, alas! in Normandy) was held by one of his cooks, on the tenure of supplying William with a dish of dillegrout.

† The Council of Cloveshoe forbade the clergy to harbor poets, harpers, musicians, and buffoons.

suddenly, and in his natural tone of voice, which was short and quick, "these muscles have known practice! Dost think thou couldst bend my bow!"

"Who could bend that of—Ulysses?" returned the Earl, fixing his deep blue eye upon the Norman's. William unconsciously changed color, for he felt that he was at that moment more Ulysses than Achilles.

CHAPTER III.

SIDE by side, William and Harold entered the fair city of Rouen, and there, a succession of the brilliant pageants and knightly entertainments (comprising those "rare feats of honor," expanded, with the following age, into the more gorgeous display of joust and tourney), was designed to dazzle the eyes and captivate the fancy of the Earl. But though Harold won, even by the confession of the chronicles most in favor of the Norman, golden opinions in a court more ready to deride than admire the Saxon,—though not only the "strength of his body," and "the boldness of his spirit," as shown in exhibitions unfamiliar to Saxon warriors, but his "manners," his "eloquence, intellect, and other good qualities," * were loftily conspicuous amidst those knightly courtiers, that sublimer part of his character, which was found in its simple manhood and intense nationality, kept him unmoved and serene amidst all intended to exercise that fatal spell which Normanized most of those who came within the circle of Norman attraction.

These festivities were relieved by pompous excursions and progresses from town to town, and fort to fort, throughout the Duchy, and, according to some authorities, even to a visit to Philip the French King at Compeigne. On the return to Rouen, Harold and the six thegns of his train were solemnly admitted into that peculiar band of warlike brothers which William had instituted, and to which, following the chronicles of the after century, we have given the name of *Knights*. The silver baldrick was belted on, and the lance, with its pointed banderol, was placed in the hand, and the seven Saxon lords became Norman knights.

The evening after this ceremonial, Harold was with the Duchess and her fair daughters —all children. The beauty of one of the girls drew from him those compliments so sweet to a mother's ear. Matilda looked up from the broidery on which she was engaged, and beckoned to her the child thus praised.

"Adeliza," she said, placing her hand on the girl's dark locks, "though we would not that thou shouldst learn too early how men's tongues can gloze and flatter, yet this noble guest hath so high a repute for truth, that thou mayest at least believe him sincere when he says thy face is fair. Think of it, and with pride, my child; let it keep thee through youth proof against the homage of meaner men; and, peradventure, St. Michael and St. Valery may bestow on thee a mate valiant and comely as this noble lord."

The child blushed to her brow; but answered with the quickness of a spoiled infant —unless, perhaps, she had been previously tutored so to reply,—"Sweet mother, I will have no mate and no lord but Harold himself; and if he will not have Adeliza as his wife, she will die a nun."

"Forward child, it is not for thee to woo!" said Matilda, smiling. "Thou heardest her, noble Harold: what is thine answer?"

"That she will grow wiser," said the Earl, laughing, as he kissed the child's forehead. "Fair damsel, ere thou art ripe for the altar, time will have sown gray in these locks; and thou wouldst smile indeed in scorn, if Harold then claimed thy troth."

"Not so," said Matilda, seriously; "High-born damsels see youth not in years but in fame—Fame, which is young for ever!"

Startled by the gravity with which Matilda spoke, as if to give importance to what had seemed a jest, the Earl, versed in courts, felt that a snare was round him; and replied in a tone between jest and earnest:—"Happy am I to wear on my heart a charm, proof against all the beauty even of this court."

Matilda's face darkened; and William entering at that time with his usual abruptness, lord and lady exchanged glances, not unobserved by Harold.

The Duke, however, drew aside the Saxon;

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* ORD. VITAL.

and saying gaily, "we Normans are not naturally jealous; but then, till now, we have not had Saxon gallants closeted with our wives;" added more seriously, "Harold, I have a grace to pray at thy hands—come with me."

The Earl followed William into his chamber, which he found filled with chiefs, in high converse; and William then hastened to inform him that he was about to make a military expedition against the Bretons; and knowing his peculiar acquaintance with the warfare, as with the language and manners, of their kindred Welch, he besought his aid in a campaign, which he promised him should be brief.

Perhaps the Earl was not, in his own mind, averse from returning William's display of power by some evidence of his own military skill, and the valor of the Saxon thegns in his train. There might be prudence in such exhibition, and, at all events, he could not with a good grace decline the proposal. He enchanted William therefore by a simple acquiescence; and the rest of the evening—deep into night—was spent in examining charts of the fort and country intended to be attacked.

The conduct and courage of Harold and his Saxons in this expedition are recorded by the Norman Chroniclers. The Earl's personal exertions saved, at the passage of Coësnon, a detachment of soldiers, who would otherwise have perished in the quicksands; and even the warlike skill of William, in the brief and brilliant campaign, was, if not eclipsed, certainly equalled, by that of the Saxon chief.

While the campaign lasted, William and Harold had but one table and one tent. To outward appearance, the familiarity between the two was that of brothers; in reality, however, these two men, both so able—one so deep in his guile, the other so wise in his tranquil caution—felt that a silent war between the two for mastery was working on, under the guise of loving peace.

Already Harold was conscious that the politic motives for his mission had failed him; already he perceived, though he scarce knew why, that William the Norman was the last man to whom he could confide his ambition, or trust for aid.

One day, as, during a short truce with the defenders of the place they were besieging, the Normans were diverting their leisure with martial games, in which Taillefer shone pre-eminent; while Harold and William stood without their tent, watching the animated field, the Duke abruptly exclaimed, to Mallet de Graville, "Bring me my bow. Now, Harold, let me see if thou canst bend it."

The bow was brought, and Saxon and Norman gathered round the spot.

"Fasten thy glove to yonder tree, Mallet," said the Duke, taking that mighty bow in his hand, and bending its stubborn yew into the noose of the string with practised ease.

Then he drew the arc to his ear; and the tree itself seemed to shake at the shock, as the shaft, piercing the glove, lodged half way in the trunk.

"Such are not our weapons," said the Earl; "and ill would it become me, unpractised, so to peril our English honor, as to strive against the arm that could bend that arc and wing that arrow. But, that I may show these Norman knights, that at least we have some weapon wherewith we can parry shaft and smite assailer,—bring me forth, Godrith, my shield and my Danish axe."

Taking the shield and axe which the Saxon brought to him, Harold then stationed himself before the tree.

"Now, fair Duke," said he smiling, choose thou thy longest shaft—bid thy ten doughtiest archers take their bows; round this tree will I move, and let each shaft be aimed at whatever space in my mailless body I leave unguarded by my shield."

"No!" said William, hastily; "that were murder."

"It is but the common peril of war," said Harold, simply; and he walked to the tree.

The blood mounted to William's brow, and the lion's thirst of carnage parched his throat.

"An he will have it so," said he, beckoning to his archers; "let not Normandy be shamed. Watch well, and let every shaft go home; avoid only the head and the heart; such orgulous vaunting is best cured by blood-letting."

The archers nodded, and took their post, each at a separate quarter; and deadly in-

deed seemed the danger of the Earl, for as he moved, though he kept his back guarded by the tree, some parts of his form the shield left exposed, and it would have been impossible, in his quick-shifting movements, for the archers so to aim as to wound, but to spare life; yet the Earl seemed to take no peculiar care to avoid the peril; lifting his bare head fearlessly above the shield, and including in one gaze of his steadfast eye, calmly bright even at the distance, all the shafts of the archers.

At one moment five of the arrows hissed through the air, and with such wonderful quickness had the shield turned to each, that three fell to the ground blunted against it, and two broke on its surface.

But William, waiting for the first discharge, and seeing full mark at Harold's shoulder as the buckler turned, now sent forth his terrible shaft. The noble Taillefer with a poet's true sympathy cried, "Saxon, beware!" but the watchful Saxon needed not the warning. As if in disdain, Harold met not the shaft with his shield, but swinging high the mighty axe (which with most men required both arms to wield it), he advanced a step, and clove the rushing arrow in twain.

Before William's loud oath of wrath and surprise left his lips, the five shafts of the remaining archers fell as vainly as their predecessors against the nimble shield.

Then advancing, Harold said cheerfully: —"This is but defence, fair Duke—and little worth were the axe if it could not smite as well as ward. Wherefore, I pray you, place upon yonder broken stone pillar, which seems some relic of Druid heathenesse, such helm and shirt of mail as thou deemest most proof against sword and pertuizan, and judge then if our English axe can guard well our English land."

"If thy axe can cleave the helmet I wore at Bavent, when the Franks and their King fled before me," said the Duke, grimly, "I shall hold Cæsar in fault, not to have invented a weapon so dread."

And striding back into his pavilion, he came forth with the helm and shirt of mail, which was worn stronger and heavier by the Normans, as fighting usually on horseback, than by Dane and Saxon, who, mainly fighting on foot, could not have endured so cumbrous a burthen: and if strong and dour generally with the Norman, judge what solid weight that mighty Duke could endure! With his own hand William placed the mail on the ruined Druid stone, and on the mail the helm.

Harold looked long and gravely at the edge of the axe; it was so richly gilt and damasquined, that the sharpness of its temper could not well have been divined, under that holiday glitter. But this axe had come to him from Canute the Great, who himself, unlike the Danes, small and slight,* had supplied his deficiency of muscle by the finest dexterity and the most perfect weapons. Famous had been that axe in the delicate hand of Canute—how much more tremendous in the ample grasp of Harold! Swinging now in both hands this weapon, with a peculiar and rapid whirl, which gave it an inconceivable impetus, the Earl let fall the crushing blow: at the first stroke, cut right in the centre, rolled the helm; at the second, through all the woven mail (cleft asunder, as if the slightest filagree work of the goldsmith) shore the blade, and a great fragment of the stone itself came tumbling on the sod.

The Normans stood aghast, and William's face was as pale as the shattered stone. The great Duke felt even his matchless dissimulation fail him; nor, unused to the special practice and craft which the axe required, could he have pretended, despite a physical strength superior even to Harold's, to rival blows that seemed to him more than mortal.

"Lives there any other man in the wide world whose arm could have wrought that feat?" exclaimed Bruse, the ancestor of the famous Scot.

"Nay," said Harold, simply, "at least thirty thousand such men have I left at home! But this was but the stroke of an idle vanity, and strength becomes tenfold in a good cause."

The Duke heard, and fearful lest he should betray his sense of the latent meaning couched under his guest's words, he hastily muttered forth reluctant compliment and praise; while Fitzosborne, De Bohun, and other chiefs

* Canute made his inferior strength and stature his excuse for not meeting Edward Ironsides in single combat.

more genuinely knightly, gave way to unrestrained admiration.

Then beckoning De Graville to follow him, the Duke strode off towards the tent of his brother of Bayeux, who, though, except on extraordinary occasions, he did not join in positive conflict, usually accompanied William in his military excursions, both to bless the host, and to advise (for his martial science was considerable) the council of war.

The bishop, who, despite the sanctimony of the Court, and his own stern nature, was (though secretly and decorously) a gallant of great success in other fields than those of Mars,* sate alone in his pavilion, inditing an epistle to a certain fair dame in Rouen, whom he had unwillingly left to follow his brother. At the entrance of William, whose morals in such matters were pure and rigid, he swept the letter into the chest of relics which always accompanied him, and rose, saying indifferently,—

"A treatise on the authenticity of St. Thomas's little finger! But what ails you? you are disturbed!"

"Odo, Odo, this man baffles me—this man fools me; I make no ground with him. I have spent—heaven knows what I have spent," said the Duke, sighing with penitent parsimony, "in banquets, and ceremonies, and processions; to say nothing of my *bel marier* of Yonne, and the sum wrung from my coffers by that greedy Ponthevin. All gone—all wasted—all melted like snow! and the Saxon is as Saxon as if he had seen neither Norman splendor, nor been released from the danger by Norman treasure. But, by the Splendor Divine, I were fool indeed, if I suffered him to return home. Would thou hadst seen the sorcerer cleave my helmet and mail just now, as easily as if they had been willow twigs. Oh, Odo, Odo, my soul is troubled, and St. Michael forsakes me!"

While William ran on thus distractedly, the prelate lifted his eyes inquiringly to De Graville, who now stood within the tent, and the knight briefly related the recent trial of strength.

"I see nought in this to chafe thee," said Odo; "the man once thine, the stronger the vassal, the more powerful the lord."

"But he is not mine; I have sounded him as far as I dare go. Matilda hath almost openly offered him my fairest child as his wife. Nothing dazzles, nothing moves him. Thinkest thou I care for his strong arm? Tut, no; I chafe at the proud heart that set the arm in motion, the proud meaning his words symbolled out,—'So will English strength guard English land from the Norman—so axe and shield will defy your mail and your shafts.' But let him beware!" growled the Duke fiercely, "or——"

"May I speak," interrupted De Graville, "and suggest a counsel?"

"Speak out, in God's name!" cried the Duke.

"Then I should say, with submission, that the way to tame a lion is not by gorging him, but daunting. Bold is the lion against open foes; but a lion in the toils loses his nature. Just now, my lord said that Harold should not return to his native land—"

"Nor shall he, but as my sworn man!" exclaimed the Duke.

"And if you now put to him that choice, think you it will favor your views? Will he not reject your proffers, and with hot scorn?"

"Scorn! darest thou that word to me?" cried the Duke. "Scorn! have I no headsman whose axe is as sharp as Harold's? and the neck of a captive is not sheathed in my Norman mail."

"Pardon, pardon, my liege," said Mallet, with spirit; "but to save my chief from a hasty action that might bring long remorse, I spoke thus boldly. Give the Earl at least fair warning:—a prison, or fealty to thee, that is the choice before him!—let him know it; let him see that thy dungeons are dark, and thy walls impassable. Threaten not his life—brave men care not for that!—threaten thyself nought, but let others work upon him with fear of his freedom. I know well these Saxish men; I know well Harold; freedom is their passion, they are cowards when threatened with the doom of four walls." *

* Odo's licentiousness was, at a later period, one of the alleged causes of his downfall, or rather against his release from the prison to which he had been consigned. He had a son named John, who distinguished himself under Henry I.—ORD. VITAL, lib. iv.

* William of Poitiers, the contemporary Norman chronicler, says of Harold, that he was a man to whom imprisonment was more odious than shipwreck.

"I conceive thee, wise son," exclaimed Odo.

"Ha!" said the Duke, slowly; "and yet it was to prevent such suspicions that I took care, after the first meeting, to separate him from Haco and Wolnoth, for they must have learned much in Norman gossip, ill to repeat to the Saxon."

"Wolnoth is almost wholly Norman," said the bishop, smiling; "Wolnoth is bound *par-amours*, to a certain fair Norman dame; and, I trow well, prefers her charms here to the thought of his return. But Haco, as thou knowest, is sullen and watchful."

"So much the better companion for Harold now," said De Graville.

"I am fated ever to plot and to scheme!" said the Duke, groaning, as if he had been the simplest of men; "but, natheless, I love the stout Earl, and I mean all for his own good,—that is, compatibly with my rights and claims to the heritage of Edward my cousin."

"Of course," said the bishop.

CHAPTER IV.

THE snares now spread for Harold were in pursuance of the policy thus resolved on. The camp soon afterwards broke up, and the troops took their way to Bayeux. William, without greatly altering his manner towards the Earl, evaded markedly (or as markedly replied not to) Harold's plain declarations, that his presence was required in England, and that he could no longer defer his departure; while, under pretence of being busied with affairs, he absented himself much from the Earl's company, or refrained from seeing him alone, and suffered Mallet de Graville, and Odo the bishop, to supply his place with Harold. The Earl's suspicions now became thoroughly aroused, and these were fed both by the hints, kindly meant, of De Graville, and the less covert discourse of the prelate: while Mallet let drop, as in gossiping illustration of William's fierce and vindictive nature, many ancedotes of that cruelty which really stained the Norman's character, Odo, more bluntly, appeared to take it for granted that Harold's sojourn in the land would be long.

"You will have time," said he, one day, as they rode together, "to assist me, I trust, in learning the language of our forefathers. Danish is still spoken much at Bayeux, the sole place in Neustria,* where the old tongue and customs still linger; and it would serve my pastoral ministry to receive your lessons; in a year or so I might hope so to profit by them as to discourse freely with the less Frankish part of my flock."

"Surely, Lord Bishop, you jest," said Harold, seriously; "you know well that within a week, at farthest, I must sail back for England with my young kinsmen."

The prelate laughed.

"I advise you, dear count and son, to be cautious how you speak so plainly to William. I perceive that you have already ruffled him by such indiscreet remarks; and you must have seen eno' of the Duke to know that, when his ire is up, his answers are short but his arms are long."

"You most grievously wrong Duke William," cried Harold, indignantly, "to suppose, merely in that playful humor, for which ye Normans are famous, that he could lay force on his confiding guest?"

"No, not a confiding guest,—a ransomed captive. Surely my brother will deem that he has purchased of Count Guy his rights over his illustrious prisoner. But courage! The Norman Court is not the Ponthevin dungeon; and your chains, at least, are roses."

The reply of wrath and defiance that rose to Harold's lip, was checked by a sign from De Graville, who raised his finger to his lip with a face expressive of caution and alarm; and, some little time after, as they halted to water their horses, De Graville came up to him and said in a low voice, and in Saxon—

"Beware how you speak too frankly to Odo. What is said to him is said to William; and the Duke, at times, so acts on the

* In the environs of Bayeux still may perhaps linger the sole remains of the Scandinavian Normans, apart from the gentry. For centuries the inhabitants of Bayeux and its vicinity were a class distinct from the Franco-Normans, or the rest of Neustria; they submitted with great reluctance to the ducal authority, and retained their old heathen cry of Thor-aide, instead of Dieu-aide!

spur of the moment that—But let me not wrong him, or needlessly alarm you."

"Sire de Graville," said Harold, "this is not the first time that the Prelate of Bayeux hath hinted at compulsion, nor that you (no doubt kindly) have warned me of purpose hostile or fraudful. As plain man to plain man, I ask you, on your knightly honor, to tell me if you know aught to make you believe that William the Duke will, under any pretext, detain me here a captive?"

Now, though Mallet de Graville had lent himself to the service of an ignoble craft, he justified it by a better reason than complaisance to his lords; for, knowing William well, his hasty ire, and his relentless ambition, he was really alarmed for Harold's safety. And, as the reader may have noted, in suggesting that policy of intimidation, the knight had designed to give the Earl at least the benefit of forewarning. So, thus adjured, De Graville replied sincerely—

"Earl Harold, on my honor as your brother in knighthood, I answer your plain question. I have cause to believe and to know that William will not suffer you to depart, unless fully satisfied on certain points, which he himself will, doubtless, ere long make clear to you."

"And if I insist on my departure, not so satisfying him?"

"Every castle on our road hath a dungeon as deep as Count Guy's; but, where another William to deliver you from William?"

"Over yon seas, a prince mightier than William, and men as resolute, at least, as your Normans."

"*Cher et puissant*, my Lord Earl," answered De Graville, "these are brave words, but of no weight in the ear of a schemer so deep as the Duke. Think you really, that King Edward—pardon my bluntness—would rouse himself from his apathy, to do more in your behalf than he has done in your kinsmen's—remonstrate and preach?—Are you even sure that on the representation of a man he hath so loved as William, he will not be content to rid his throne of so formidable a subject? You speak of the English people; doubtless you are popular and beloved, but it is the habit of no people, least of all your own, to stir actively and in concert, without leaders. The Duke knows the factions of England as well as you do. Remember how closely he is connected with Tostig, your ambitious brother. Have you no fear that Tostig himself, earl of the most warlike part of the kingdom, will not only do his best to check the popular feeling in your favor, but foment every intrigue to detain you here, and leave himself the first noble in the land? As for other leaders, save Gurth (who is but your own vice earl), who is there that will not rejoice at the absence of Harold? You have made foes of the only family that approaches the power of your own—the heirs of Loefric and Algar.—Your strong hand removed from the reins of the empire, tumults and dissensions ere long will break forth that will distract men's minds from an absent captive, and centre them on the safety of their own hearths, or the advancement of their own interests. You see that I know something of the state of your native land; but deem not my own observation, though not idle, sufficed to bestow that knowledge. I learn it more from William's discourses; William, who from Flanders, from Boulogne, from England itself, by a thousand channels, hears all that passes between the cliffs of Dover and the marches of Scotland."

Harold paused long before he replied, for his mind was now thoroughly awakened to his danger; and, while recognizing the wisdom and intimate acquaintance of affairs with which De Graville spoke, he was also rapidly revolving the best course for himself to pursue in such extremes. At length he said—

"I pass by your remarks on the state of England, with but one comment. You underrate Gurth, my brother, when you speak of him but as the vice earl of Harold. You underrate one, who needs but an object, to excel, in arms and in council, my father Godwin himself.—That object a brother's wrongs would create from a brother's love, and three hundred ships would sail up the Seine to demand your captive, manned by warriors as hardy as those who wrested Neustria from King Charles."

"Granted," said De Graville. "But, William, who could cut off the hands and feet of his own subjects for an idle jest on his birth, could as easily put out the eyes of a cap-

tive foe. And of what worth are the ablest brain, and the stoutest arm, when the man is dependent on another for very sight!"

Harold involuntarily shuddered, but recovering himself on the instant, he replied, with a smile—

"Thou makest thy Duke a butcher more fell than his ancestor Rolfganger. But thou saidst he needed but to be satisfied on certain points. What are they?"

"Ah, *that* thou must divine, or he unfold. But see, William himself approaches you."

And here the Duke, who had been till then in the rear, spurred up with courteous excuses to Harold for his long defection from his side; and, as they resumed their way, talked with all his former frankness and gaiety.

"By the way, dear brother in arms," said he, "I have provided thee this evening with comrades more welcome, I fear, than myself —Haco and Wolnoth. That last is a youth whom I love dearly: the first is unsocial eno', and methinks would make a better hermit than soldier. But, by St. Valery, I forgot to tell thee that an envoy from Flanders to-day, amongst other news, brought me some that may interest thee. There is a strong commotion in thy brother Tostig's Northumbrian earldom, and the rumor runs that his fierce vassals will drive him forth and select some other lord: talk was of the sons of Algar—so I think ye called the stout dead Earl. This looks grave, for my dear cousin Edward's health is failing fast. May the saints spare him long from their rest!"

"These are indeed ill tidings," said the Earl; "and I trust that they suffice to plead at once my excuse for urging my immediate departure. Grateful am I for thy most gracious hostship, and thy just and generous intercession with thy *liegeman*" (Harold dwelt emphatically on the last word), for my release from a capture disgraceful to all Christendom. The ransom so nobly paid for me I will not insult thee, dear my lord, by affecting to repay; but such gifts as our cheapmen hold most rare, perchance thy lady and thy fair children will deign to receive at my hands. Of these hereafter. Now may I ask but a vessel from thy nearest port."

"We will talk of this, dear guest and brother knight, on some later occasion. Lo, yon castle—ye have no such in England. See its vawmures and fosses!"

"A noble pile," answered Harold. "But pardon me that I press for—"

"Ye have no such strongholds, I say, in England?" interrupted the Duke, petulantly.

"Nay," replied the Englishman, "we have two strongholds far larger than that—Salisbury Plain and Newmarket Heath!*—strongholds that will contain fifty thousand men who need no walls but their shields. Count William, England's ramparts are her men, and her strongest castles are her widest plains."

"Ah!" said the Duke, biting his lip, "ah, so be it—but to return;—in that castle, mark it well, the Dukes of Normandy hold their prisoners of state;" and then he added with a laugh: "but we hold you, noble captive, in a prison more strong—our love and our heart."

As he spoke, he turned his eye full upon Harold, and the gaze of the two encountered: that of the Duke was brilliant, but stern and sinister; that of Harold, steadfast and reproachful. As if by a spell, the eye of each rested long on that of the other—as the eyes of two lords of the forest, ere the rush and the spring.

William was the first to withdraw his gaze, and as he did so, his lip quivered and his brow knit. Then waving his hand for some of the lords behind to join him and the Earl, he spurred his steed, and all further private conversation was suspended. The train pulled not bridle before they reached a monastery, at which they rested for the night.

CHAPTER V.

On entering the chamber set apart for him in the convent, Harold found Haco and Wolnoth already awaiting him; and a wound he had received in the last skirmish against the Bretons, having broken out afresh on the

* Similar was the answer of Goodyn the Bishop of Winchester, ambassador from Henry VIII. to the French king. To this day the English entertain the same notion of forts as Harold and Goodyn.

road, allowed him an excuse to spend the rest of the evening alone with his kinsmen.

On conversing with them—now at length, and unrestrainedly—Harold saw everything to increase his alarm; for even Wolnoth, when closely pressed, could not but give evidence of the unscrupulous astuteness with which, despite all the boasted honor of chivalry, the Duke's character was stained. For, indeed, in his excuse, it must be said, that from the age of eight, exposed to the snares of his own kinsmen, and more often saved by craft than by strength, William had been taught betimes to justify dissimulation, and confound wisdom with guile. Harold now bitterly recalled the parting words of Edward, and recognized their justice, though as yet he did not see all that they portended. Fevered and disquieted yet more by the news from England, and conscious that not only the power of his house and the foundations of his aspiring hopes, but the very weal and safety of the land, were daily imperilled by his continued absence, a vague and unspeakable terror for the first time in his life preyed on his bold heart—a terror like that of superstition, for, like superstition, it was of the Unknown; there was everything to shun, yet no substance to grapple with. He who could have smiled at the brief pangs of death, shrunk from the thought of the perpetual prison; he, whose spirit rose elastic to every storm of life, and exulted in the air of action, stood appalled at the fear of *blindness;* —blindness in the midst of a career so grand; —blindness in the midst of his pathway to a throne;—blindness, that curse which palsies the strong and enslaves the free, and leaves the whole man defenceless;—defenceless in an Age of Iron.

What, too, were those mysterious points on which he was to satisfy the Duke? He sounded his young kinsmen; but Wolnoth evidently knew nothing; Haco's eye showed intelligence, but by his looks and gestures he seemed to signify that what he knew he would only disclose to Harold. Fatigued, not more with his emotions than with that exertion to conceal them so peculiar to the English character (proud virtue of manhood so little appreciated, and so rarely understood!) he at length kissed Wolnoth, and dismissed him, yawning, to his rest. Haco, lingering, closed the door, and looked long and mournfully at the Earl.

"Noble kinsman," said the young son of Sweyn, "I foresaw from the first, that, as our fate will be thine;—only round thee will be wall and fosse; unless, indeed, thou wilt lay aside thine own nature;—it will give thee no armor here—and assume that which——"

"Ho!" interrupted the Earl, shaking with repressed passion, "I see already all the foul fraud and treason to guest and noble that surround me! But if the Duke dare such shame, he shall do so in the eyes of day. I will hail the first boat I see on his river, or his sea coast; and woe to those who lay hand on this arm to detain me!"

Haco lifted his ominous eyes to Harold's; and there was something in their cold and unimpassioned expression which seemed to repel all enthusiasm, and to deaden all courage.

"Harold," said he, "if but for one such moment thou obeyest the impulse of thy manly pride, or thy just resentment, thou art lost for ever; one show of violence, one word of affront, and thou givest the Duke the excuse he thirsts for. Escape! It is impossible. For the last five years, I have pondered night and day the means of flight; for I deem that my hostageship, by right, is long since over; and no means have I seen or found. Spies dog my every step, as spies, no doubt, dog thine."

"Ha! it is true," said Harold; "never once have I wandered three paces from the camp or the troop, but, under some pretext, I have been followed by knight or courtier. God and our Lady help me, if but for England's sake! But what counsellest thou? Boy, teach me; thou hast been reared in this air of wile—to me it is strange, and I am as a wild beast encompassed by a circle of fire."

"Then," answered Haco, "meet craft by craft, smile by smile. Feel that thou art under compulsion, and act,—as the Church itself pardons men for acting, so compelled."

Harold started, and the blush spread red over his cheeks.

Haco continued.

"Once in prison, and thou art lost evermore to the sight of men. William would not then dare to release thee—unless, indeed, he

first rendered thee powerless to avenge. Though I will not malign him, and say that he himself is capable of secret murder, yet he has ever those about him who are. He drops in his wrath some hasty word; it is seized by ready and ruthless tools. The great Count of Bretagne was in his way; William feared him as he fears thee; and in his own court, and amongst his own men, the great Count of Bretagne died by poison. For *thy* doom, open or secret, William, however, could find ample excuse."

"How, boy? What charge can the Norman bring against a free Englishman?"

"His kinsman Alfred," answered Haco, "was blinded, tortured, and murdered. And in the court of Rouen, they say these deeds were done by Godwin, thy father. The Normans who escorted Alfred were decimated in cold blood; again, they say Godwin thy father slaughtered them.'

"It is hell's own lie!" cried Harold, "and so have I proved already to the Duke."

"Proved? No! The lamb does not prove the cause which is prejudged by the wolf. Often and often have I heard the Normans speak of those deeds, and cry that vengeance yet shall await them. It is but to renew the old accusation, to say Godwin's sudden death was God's proof of his crime, and even Edward himself would forgive the Duke for thy bloody death. But grant the best; grant that the more lenient doom were but the prison; grant that Edward and the English invaded Normandy to enforce thy freedom;—knowest thou what William hath ere now done with hostages? He hath put them in the van of his army, and seared out their eyes in the sight of both hosts. Deemest thou he would be more gentle to us and to thee? Such are thy dangers. Be bold and frank,—and thou canst not escape them; be wary and wise, promise and feign,—and they are baffled: cover thy lion heart with the fox's hide until thou art free from the toils."

"Leave me, leave me," said Harold, hastily. "Yet, hold. Thou didst seem to understand me when I hinted of—in a word, what is the object William would gain from me?"

Haco looked round; again went to the door—again opened and closed it—approached, and whispered, "The crown of England!" The Earl bounded as if shot through the heart; then, again he cried, "Leave me. I must be alone—alone now. Go! go!"

CHAPTER VI.

Only in solitude could that strong man give way to his emotions; and at first they rushed forth so confused and stormy, so hurtling one the other, that hours elapsed before he could serenely face the terrible crisis of his position.

The great historian of Italy has said, that whenever the simple and truthful German came amongst the plotting and artful Italians, and experienced their duplicity and craft, he straightway became more false and subtle than the Italians themselves; to his own countrymen, indeed, he continued to retain his characteristic sincerity and good faith; but, once duped and tricked by the southern schemers, as if with a fierce scorn, he rejected troth with the truthless; he exulted in mastering them in their own wily statesmanship; and if reproached for insincerity, retorted, with *naive* wonder, "Ye Italians, and complain of insincerity! How otherwise can one deal with you—how be safe amongst you?"

Somewhat of this revolution of all the natural elements of his character took place in Harold's mind that stormy and solitary night. In the transport of his indignation, he resolved not doltishly to be thus outwitted to his ruin. The perfidious host had deprived himself of that privilege of Truth,—the large and heavenly security of man;—it was but a struggle of wit against wit, snare against snare. The state and law of warfare had started up in the lap of fraudful peace; and ambush must be met by ambush, plot by plot.

Such was the nature of the self-excuses by which the Saxon defended his resolves, and they appeared to him more sanctioned by the stake which depended on success—a stake which his undying patriotism allowed to be far more vast than his individual ambition. Nothing was more clear than that if

he were detained in a Norman prison, at the time of King Edward's death, the sole obstacle to William's design on the English throne would be removed. In the interim, the Duke's intrigues would again surround the infirm King with Norman influences; and in the absence both of any legitimate heir to the throne capable of commanding the trust of the people, and of his own preponderating ascendancy both in the Witan and the armed militia of the nation, what could arrest the designs of the grasping Duke? Thus his own liberty was indissolubly connected with that of his country;—and for that great end, the safety of England, all means grew holy.

When the next morning he joined the cavalcade, it was only by his extreme paleness that the struggle and agony of the past night could be traced, and he answered with correspondent cheerfulness William's cordial greetings.

As they rode together—still accompanied by several knights, and the discourse was thus general, the features of the country suggested the theme of the talk. For, now in the heart of Normandy, but in rural districts remote from the great towns, nothing could be more waste and neglected than the face of the land. Miserable and sordid to the last degree were the huts of the serfs; and when these last met them on their way, half-naked and hunger-worn, there was a wild gleam of hate and discontent in their eyes, as they louted low to the Norman riders, and heard the bitter and scornful taunts with which they were addressed; for the Norman and the Frank had more than indifference for the peasants of their land; they literally both despised and abhorred them, as of different race from the conquerors. The Norman settlement especially was so recent in the land, that none of that amalgamation between class and class which centuries had created in England, existed there; though in England the theowe was wholly a slave, and the ceorl in a political servitude to his lord, yet public opinion, more mild than law, preserved the thraldom from wanton aggravation; and slavery was felt to be wrong and unchristian. The Saxon Church—not the less, perhaps, for its very ignorance—sympathized more with the subject population, and was more associated with it, than the comparatively learned and haughty ecclesiastics of the continent, who held aloof from the unpolished vulgar. The Saxon Church invariably set the example of freeing the theowe and emancipating the ceorl, and taught that such acts were to the salvation of the soul. The rude and homely manner in which the greater part of the Saxon thegns lived—dependent solely for their subsistence on their herds and agricultural produce, and therefore on the labor of their peasants—not only made the distinctions of rank less harsh and visible, but rendered it the interest of the lords to feed and clothe well their dependents. All our records of the customs of the Saxons prove the ample sustenance given to the poor, and a general care for their lives and rights, which, compared with the Frank laws, may be call enlightened and humane. And above all, the lowest serf ever had the great hope both of freedom and of promotion; but the beast of the field was holier in the eyes of the Norman, than the wretched villein.* We have likened the Norman to the Spartan, and, most of all, he was like him in his scorn of the helot.

Thus embruted and degraded, deriving little from religion itself, except its terrors, the general habits of the peasants on the continent of France were against the very basis of Christianity—marriage. They lived together for the most part without that tie,

* See Mr. Wright's very interesting article on the "Condition of the English Peasantry," etc., Archæologia, vol. xxx. pp. 205-244. I must, however, observe, that one very important fact seems to have been generally overlooked by all inquirers, or, at least, not sufficiently enforced, viz., that it was the Norman's contempt for the general mass of the subject population which more, perhaps, than any other cause, broke up positive slavery in England. Thus the Norman very soon lost sight of that distinction the Anglo-Saxons had made between the agricultural ceorl and the theowe; *i. e.* between the serf of the soil and the personal slave. Hence these classes became fused in each other, and were gradually emancipated by the same circumstances. This, be it remarked, could never have taken place under the Anglo-Saxon laws, which kept constantly feeding the class of slaves by adding to it convicted felons and their children. The subject-population became too necessary to the Norman barons, in their feuds with each other, or their king, to be long oppressed; and, in the time of Froissart, that worthy chronicler ascribes the insolence, or high spirit of *le menu peuple* to their *grand aise, et abondance de biens*.

and hence the common name, with which they were called by their masters, lay and clerical, was the coarsest word contempt can apply to the sons of women.

"The hounds glare at us," said Odo, as a drove of these miserable serfs passed along. "They need ever the lash to teach them to know the master. Are they thus mutinous and surly in England, Lord Harold?"

"No: but there our meanest theowes are not seen so clad, nor housed in such hovels," said the Earl.

"And is it really true that a villein with you can rise to be a noble?"

"Of at least yearly occurrence. Perhaps the forefathers of one-fourth of our Anglo-Saxon thegns held the plough, or followed some caft mechanical."

Duke William politicly checked Odo's answer, and said mildly,—

"Every land its own laws: and by them alone should it be governed by a virtuous and wise ruler. But, noble Harold, I grieve that you should thus note the sore point in my realm. I grant that the condition of the peasants and the culture of the land need reform. But in my childhood, there was a fierce outbreak of rebellion among the villeins, needing bloody example to check, and the memories of wrath between lord and villein must sleep before we can do justice between them, as please St. Peter, and by Lanfranc's aid, we hope to do. Meanwhile, one great portion of our villeinage in our larger towns we have much mitigated. For trade and commerce are the strength of rising states; and if our fields are barren our streets are prosperous."

Harold bowed, and rode musingly on. That civilization he had so much admired bounded itself to the noble class, and, at farthest, to the circle of the Duke's commercial policy. Beyond it, on the outskirts of humanity, lay the mass of the people. And here, no comparison in favor of the latter could be found between English and Norman civilization.

The towers of Bayeux rose dim in the distance, when William proposed a halt in a pleasant spot by the side of a small stream, overshadowed by oak and beach. A tent for himself and Harold was pitched in haste, and after an abstemious refreshment, the Duke, taking Harold's arm, led him away from the train along the margin of the murmuring stream.

They were soon in a remote, pastoral, primitive spot, a spot like those which the old menestrels loved to describe, and in which some pious hermit might, pleased, have fixed his solitary home.

Halting where a mossy bank jutted over the water, William motioned to his companion to seat himself, and reclining at his side, abstractedly took the pebbles from the margin and dropped them into the stream. They fell to the bottom with a hollow sound; the circle they made on the surface widened, and was lost; and the wave rushed and murmured on, disdainful.

"Harold," said the Duke at last, "thou hast thought, I fear, that I have trifled with thy impatience to return. But there is on my mind a matter of great moment to thee and to me, and it must out, before thou canst depart. On this very spot where we now sit, sate in early youth, Edward thy King, and William thy host. Soothed by the loneliness of the place, and the music of the bell from the church tower, rising pale through yonder glade, Edward spoke of his desire for the monastic life, and of his content with his exile in the Norman land. Few then were the hopes that he should ever attain the throne of Alfred. I, more martial, an ardent for him as myself, combated the thought of the convent, and promised, that, if ever occasion meet arrived, and he needed the Norman help, I would, with arm and heart, do a chief's best to win him his lawful crown. Heedest thou me, dear Harold?"

"Ay, my host, with heart as with ear."

"And Edward then, pressing my hand as I now press thine, while answering gratefully, promised, that if he did, contrary to all human foresight, gain his heritage, he, in case I survived him, would bequeath that heritage to me. Thy hand withdraws itself from mine."

"But from surprise. Duke William, proceed."

"Now," resumed William, "when thy kinsmen were sent to me as hostages for the most powerful House in England—the only one that could thwart the desire of my cousin—I naturally deemed this a corroboration of

his promise, and an earnest of his continued designs; and in this I was reassured by the prelate, Robert Archbishop of Canterbury, who knew the most secret conscience of your King. Wherefore my pertinacity in retaining those hostages; wherefore my disregard to Edward's mere remonstrances, which, I not unnaturally conceived to be but his meek concessions to the urgent demands of thyself and House. Since then, Fortune or Providence hath favored the promise of the King, and my just expectations founded thereon. For one moment, it seemed indeed, that Edward regretted or reconsidered the pledge of our youth. He sent for his kinsman, the Atheling, natural heir to the throne. But the poor prince died. The son, a mere child, if I am rightly informed, the laws of thy land will set aside, should Edward die ere the child grow a man; and, moreover, I am assured, that the young Edgar hath no power of mind or intellect to wield so weighty a sceptre as that of England. Your King, also, ever since your absence, hath had severe visitings of sickness, and ere another year his new Abbey may hold his tomb."

William here paused; again dropped the pebbles into the stream, and glanced furtively on the unrevealing face of the Earl. He resumed—

"Thy brother Tostig, as so nearly allied to my House, would, I am advised, back my claims; and wert thou absent from England, Tostig, I conceive, would be in thy place as the head of the great party of Godwin. But to prove how little I care for thy brother's aid compared with thine, and how implicitly I count on thee, I have openly told thee what a wilier plotter would have concealed—viz. the danger to which thy brother is menaced in his own earldom. To the point, then, I pass at once. I might, as my ransomed captive, detain thee here, until, without thee, I had won my English throne, and I know that thou alone couldst obstruct my just claims, or interfere with the King's will, by which that appanage will be left to me. Nevertheless, I unbosom myself to thee, and would owe my crown solely to thine aid. I pass on to treat with thee, dear Harold, not as lord with vassal, but as prince with prince. On thy part, thou shalt hold for me the castle of Dover, to yield to my fleet when the hour comes; thou shalt aid me in peace, and through thy National Witan, to succeed to Edward, by whose laws I will reign in all things conformably with the English rites, habits, and decrees. A stronger king to guard England from the Dane, and a more practised head to improve her prosperity, I am vain eno' to say thou wilt not find in Christendom. On my part, I offer to thee my fairest daughter, Adeliza, to whom thou shalt be straightway betrothed: thine own young unwedded sister, Thyra, thou shalt give to one of my greatest barons: all the lands, dignities, and possessions thou holdest now, thou shalt still retain; and if, as I suspect, thy brother Tostig cannot keep his vast principality north the Humber, it shall pass to thee. Whatever else thou canst demand in guarantee of my love and gratitude, or so to confirm thy power that thou shalt rule over thy countships as free and as powerful as the great Counts of Provence or Anjou reign in France over theirs, subject only to the mere form of holding in fief to the Suzerain, as I, stormy subject, hold Normandy under Philip of France,—shall be given to thee. In truth, there will be two kings in England, though in name but one. And far from losing by the death of Edward, thou shalt gain by the subjection of every meaner rival, and the cordial love of thy grateful William.—Splendor of God, Earl, thou keepest me long for thine answer!"

"What thou offerest," said the Earl, fortifying himself with the resolution of the previous night, and compressing his lips, livid with rage, "is beyond my deserts, and all that the greatest chief under royalty could desire. But England is not Edward's to leave, nor mine to give: its throne rests with the Witan."

"And the Witan rests with thee," exclaimed William, sharply. "I ask but for possibilities, man; I ask but all thine influence on my behalf; and if it be less than I deem, mine is the loss. What dost thou resign? I will not presume to menace thee; but thou wouldst indeed despise my folly, if now, knowing my designs, I let thee forth—not to aid but betray them. I know thou lovest England, so do I. Thou deemest me a foreigner; true, but the Norman and Dane are of precisely the same origin. Thou, of

the race of Canute, knowest how popular was the reign of that King. Why should William's be less so? Canute had no right whatsoever, save that of the sword. My right will be kinship to Edward—Edward's wish in my favor—the consent through thee of the Witan—the absence of all other worthy heir—my wife's clear descent from Alfred, which, in my children, restore the Saxon line, through its purest and noblest ancestry, to the throne. Think over all this, and then wilt thou tell me that I merit not this crown?"

Harold yet paused, and the fiery Duke resumed—

"Are the terms I give not tempting eno' to my captive—to the son of the great Godwin, who, no doubt falsely, but still by the popular voice of all Europe, had power of life and death over my cousin Alfred and my Norman knights? or dost thou thyself covet the English crown; and is it to a rival that I have opened my heart?"

"Nay," said Harold in the crowning effort of his new and fatal lesson in simulation. "Thou hast convinced me, Duke William; let it be as thou sayest."

The Duke gave way to his joy by a loud exclamation, and then recapitulated the articles of the engagement, to which Harold simply bowed his head. Amicably then the Duke embraced the Earl, and the two returned towards the tent.

While the steeds were brought forth, William took the opportunity to draw Odo apart; and, after a short whispered conference, the prelate hastened to his barb, and spurred fast to Bayeux in advance of the party. All that day, and all that night, and all the next morn till noon, couriers and riders went abroad, north and south, east and west, to all the more famous abbeys and churches in Normandy, and holy and awful was the spoil with which they returned for the ceremony of the next day.

CHAPTER VII.

The stately mirth of the evening banquet seemed to Harold as the malign revel of some demoniac orgy. He thought he read in every face the exultation over the sale of England. Every light laugh in the proverbial ease of the social Normans rang on his ear like the joy of a ghastly Sabbat. All his senses preteruaturally sharpened to that magnetic keenness in which we less hear and see than conceive and divine, the lowest murmur William breathed in the ear of Odo, boomed clear to his own; the slightest interchange of glance between some dark browed priest, and large breasted warrior, flashed upon his vision. The irritation of his recent and neglected wound combined with his mental excitement to quicken, yet to confuse, his faculties. Body and soul were fevered. He floated, as it were, between a delirium and a dream.

Late in the evening he was led into the chamber where the Duchess sat alone with Adeliza and her second son William—a boy who had the red hair and florid hues of the ancestral Dane, but was not without a certain bold and strange kind of beauty, and who, even in childhood, all covered with broidery and gems, betrayed the passion for that extravagant and fantastic foppery for which William the Red King, to the scandal of Church and pulpit, exchanged the decorous pomp of his father's generation. A formal presentation of Harold to the little maid was followed by a brief ceremony of words, which conveyed what to the scornful sense of the Earl seemed the mockery of betrothal between infant and bearded man. Glozing congratulations buzzed around him; then there was a flash of lights on his dizzy eyes, he found himself moving through a corridor between Odo and William. He was in his room hung with arras and strewd with rushes; before him in niches, various images of the Virgin, the Archangel Michael, St. Stephen, St. Peter, St. John, St. Valery; and from the bells in the monastic edifice hard by tolled the third watch * of the night—the narrow casement was out of reach, high in the massive wall, and the starlight was darkened by the great church tower. Harold longed for air. All his earldom had he given at that moment, to feel the cold blast of his native skies moaning round his Saxon wolds. He opened his door, and looked forth. A lanthorn swung on high from the groined roof of the corri-

* Twelve o'clock.

dor. By the lanthorn stood a tall sentry in arms, and its gleam fell red upon an iron grate that jealously closed the egress. The Earl closed the door, and sat down on his bed, covering his face with his clenched hand. The veins throbbed in every pulse, his own touch seemed to him like fire. The prophecies of Hilda on the fatal night by the bautastein, which had decided him to reject the prayer of Gurth, the fears of Edith, and the cautions of Edward, came back to him, dark, haunting, and over-masteringly. They rose between him and his sober sense, whenever he sought to re-collect his thoughts, now to madden him with the sense of his folly in belief, now to divert his mind from the perilous present to the triumphant future they foretold; and of all the varying chaunts of the Vala, ever two lines seemed to burn into his memory, and to knell upon his ear as if they contained the counsel they ordained him to pursue:

> "GUILE BY GUILE OPPOSE, and never
> Crown and brow shall Force dissever!"

So there he sat, locked and rigid, not reclining, not disrobing, till in that posture a haggard, troubled, fitful sleep came over him; nor did he wake till the hour of prime,* when ringing bells and trampling feet, and the hum of prayer from the neighboring chapel, roused him into waking yet more troubled, and well nigh as dreamy. But now Godrith and Haco entered the room, and the former inquired with some surprise in his tone, if he had arranged with the Duke to depart that day; "For," said he, "the Duke's horse-thegn has just been with me, to say that the Duke himself, and a stately retinue, are to accompany you this evening towards Harfleur, where a ship will be in readiness for our transport; and I know that the chamberlain (a courteous and pleasant man) is going round to my fellow-thegns in your train, with gifts of hawks, and chains, and broidered palls."

"It is so," said Haco, in answer to Harold's brightening and appealing eye.

"Go then, at once, Godrith," exclaimed the Earl, bounding to his feet, "have all in order to part at the first break of the trump. Never, I ween, did trump sound so cheerily as the blast that shall announce our return to England. Haste—haste!"

As Godrith, pleased in the Earl's pleasure, though himself already much fascinated by the honors he had received and the splendor he had witnessed, withdrew, Haco said, "Thou hast taken my counsel, noble kinsman?"

"Question me not, Haco! Out of my memory, all that hath passed here!"

"Not yet," said Haco, with that gloomy and intense seriousness of voice and aspect, which was so at variance with his years, and which impressed all he said with an indescribable authority. "Not yet; for even while the chamberlain went his round with the parting gifts, I, standing in the angle of the wall in the yard, heard the Duke's deep whisper to Roger Bigod, who has the guard of the keape, 'Have the men all armed at noon in the passage below the council-hall, to mount at the stamp of my foot: and if then I give thee a prisoner—wonder not, but lodge him—' The Duke paused; and Bigod said, 'Where, my liege?' And the Duke answered fiercely, 'Where? why where but in the *Tour noir?*—where but in the cell in which Malvoisin rotted out his last hour?' Not yet, then, let the memory of Norman wile pass away; let the lip guard the freedom still."

All the bright native soul that before Haco spoke had dawned gradually back on the Earl's fair face, now closed itself up, as the leaves of a poisoned flower; and the pupil of the eye receding, left to the orb that secret and strange expression which had baffled all readers of the heart in the look of his impenetrable father.

"*Guile by guile oppose!*" he muttered vaguely; then started, clenched his hand, and smiled.

In a few moments, more than the usual levee of Norman nobles thronged into the room; and what with the wonted order of the morning, in the repast, the church service of tierce, and a ceremonial visit to Matilda, who confirmed the intelligence that all was in preparation for his departure, and charged him with gifts of her own needlework to his sister the Queen, and various messages of gracious nature, the time waxed late into noon without his having yet seen either William or Odo.

* SIX, A.M.

He was still with Matilda, when the Lords Fitzosborne and Raoul de Tancarville entered in full robes of state, and with countenances unusually composed and grave, and prayed the Earl to accompany them into the Duke's presence.

Harold obeyed in silence, not unprepared for covert danger, by the formality of the counts, as by the warnings of Haco; but, indeed, undivining the solemnity of the appointed snare. On entering the lofty hall, he beheld William seated in state; his sword of office in his hand, his ducal robe on his imposing form, and with that peculiarly erect air of the head which he assumed upon all ceremonial occasions.* Behind him stood Odo of Bayeux, in aube and pallium; some score of the Duke's greatest vassals; and at a little distance from the throne chair, was what seemed a table, or vast chest, covered all over with cloth of gold.

Small time for wonder or self-collection did the Duke give the Saxon.

"Approach, Harold," said he, in the full tones of that voice, so singularly effective in command; "approach, and without fear, as without regret. Before the members of this noble assembly—all witnesses of thy faith, and all guarantees of mine—I summon thee to confirm by oath the promises thou mad'st me yesterday; namely, to aid me to obtain the kingdom of England on the death of King Edward, my cousin; to marry my daughter Adeliza; and to send thy sister hither, that I may wed her, as we agreed, to one of my worthiest and prowest counts. Advance thou, Odo, my brother, and repeat to the noble Earl the Norman form by which he will take the oath."

Then Odo stood forth by that mysterious receptacle covered with the cloth of gold, and said briefly, "Thou wilt swear, as far as is in thy power, to fulfil thy agreement with William, Duke of the Normans, if thou live, and God aid thee; and in witness of that oath thou wilt lay thy hand upon the reliquaire," pointing to a small box that lay on the cloth of gold.

All this was so sudden—all flashed so rapidly upon the Earl, whose natural intellect, however great, was, as we have often seen, more deliberate than prompt — so thoroughly was the bold heart, which no siege could have sapped, taken by surprise and guile—so paramount through all the whirl and tumult of his mind, rose the thought of England irrevocably lost, if he who alone could save her was in the Norman dungeons—so darkly did all Haco's fears, and his own just suspicions, quell and master him, that mechanically, dizzily, dreamily, he laid his hand on the reliquaire, and repeated, with automaton lips—

"If I live, and if God aid me to it!"

Then all the assembly repeated solemnly—

"God aid him!"

And suddenly, at a sign from William, Odo and Raoul de Tancarville raised the gold cloth, and the Duke's voice bade Harold look below.

As when man descends from the gilded sepulchre to the loathsome charnel, so at the lifting of that cloth, all the dread ghastliness of Death was revealed. There, from abbey and from church, from cyst and from shrine, had been collected all the relics of human nothingness in which superstition adored the mementos of saints divine; there lay, pell mell and huddled, skeleton and mummy—the dry dark skin, the white gleaming bones of the dead, mockingly cased in gold, and decked with rubies; there, grim fingers protruded through the hideous chaos, and pointed towards the living man ensnared; there, the skull grinned scoff under the holy mitre;—and suddenly rushed back, luminous and searing, upon Harold's memory, the dream long forgotten, or but dimly remembered in the healthful business of life—the gibe and the wirble of the dead men's bones.

'At that sight,' say the Norman chronicles, 'the Earl shuddered and trembled.'

"Awful, indeed, thine oath, and natural thine emotion," said the Duke; "for in that cyst are all those relics which religion deems the holiest in our land. The dead have heard thine oath, and the saints even now record it in the halls of heaven! Cover again the holy bones!"

* A celebrated antiquary, in his treatise in the "Archæologia" on the authenticity of the Bayeux tapestry, very justly invites attention to the rude attempt of the artist to preserve individuality in his portraits; and especially to the singularly erect bearing of the Duke, by which he is at once recognized wherever he is introduced. Less pains are taken with the portrait of Harold; but even in that a certain elegance of proportion, and length of limb, as well as height of stature, are generally preserved.

BOOK THE TENTH.

THE SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE good Bishop Alred, now raised to the See of York, had been summoned from his cathedral seat by Edward, who had indeed undergone a severe illness, during the absence of Harold; and that illness had been both preceded and followed by mystical presentiments of the evil days that were to fall on England after his death. He had therefore sent for the best and the holiest prelate in his realm, to advise and counsel with.

The Bishop had returned to his lodging in London (which was in a Benedictine Abbey, not far from the Aldgate) late one evening, from visiting the King at his rural palace of Havering; and he was seated alone in his cell musing over an interview with Edward, which had evidently much disturbed him, when the door was abruptly thrown open, and pushing aside in haste the monk, who was about formally to announce him, a man so travel-stained in garb, and of a mein so disordered, rushed in, that Alred gazed at first as on a stranger, and not till the intruder spoke did he recognize Harold the Earl. Even then, so wild was the Earl's eye, so dark his brow, and so livid his cheek, that it rather seemed the ghost of the man than the man himself. Closing the door on the monk, the Earl stood a moment on the threshold, with a breast heaving with emotions which he sought in vain to master; and, as if resigning the effort, he sprang forward, clasped the prelate's knees, bowed his head on his lap, and sobbed aloud. The good Bishop, who had known all the sons of Godwin from their infancy, and to whom Harold was as dear as his own child, folding his hands over the Earl's head, soothingly murmured a benediction.

"No, no," cried the Earl, starting to his feet, and tossing the dishevelled hair from his eyes, "bless me not yet! Hear my tale first, and then say what comfort, what refuge, thy Church can bestow!"

Hurriedly then the Earl poured forth the dark story, already known to the reader,—the prison at Belrem, the detention at William's court, the fears, the snares, the discourse by the river-side, the oath over the relics. This told, he continued, "I found myself in the open air, and knew not, till the light of the sun smote me, what might have passed into my soul. I was, before, as a corpse which a witch raises from the dead, endows with a spirit not its own—passive to her hand—life-like, not living. Then, then it was as if a demon had passed from my body, laughing scorn at the foul things it had made the clay do. Oh, father, father! is there not absolution from this oath,—an oath I dare not keep? rather perjure myself than betray my land!"

The prelate's face was as pale as Harold's, and it was some moments before he could reply.

"The Church can loose and unloose—such is its delegated authority. But speak on; what saidst thou at the last to William?"

"I know not, remember not—aught save these words. 'Now, then, give me those for whom I placed myself in thy power; let me restore Haco to his fatherland, and Wolnoth to his mother's kiss, and wend home my way.' And, saints in heaven! what was the answer

of this caitiff Norman, with his glittering eye and venomed smile? 'Haco thou shalt have, for he is an orphan, and an uncle's love is not so hot as to burn from a distance; but Wolnoth, thy mother's son, must stay with me as a hostage for thine own faith. Godwin's hostages are released; Harold's hostage I retain: it is but a form, yet these forms are the bonds of princes.'

"I looked at him, and his eye quailed. And I said, 'That is not in the compact.' And William answered, 'No, but it is the seal to it.' Then I turned from the Duke and I called my brother to my side, and I said, 'Over the seas have I come for thee. Mount thy steed and ride by my side, for I will not leave the land without thee.' And Wolnoth answered, 'Nay, Duke William tells me that he hath made treaties with thee, for which I am still to be the hostage; and Normandy has grown my home, and I love William as my lord.' Hot words followed, and Wolnoth, chafed, refused entreaty and command, and suffered me to see that his heart was not with England! O, mother, mother, how shall I meet thine eye! So I returned with Haco. The moment I set foot on my native England, that moment her form seemed to rise from the tall cliffs, her voice to speak in the winds! All the glamor by which I had been bound, forsook me; and I sprang forward in scorn, above the fear of the dead men's bones. Miserable overcraft of the snarer! Had my simple word alone bound me, or that word been ratified after slow and deliberate thought, by the ordinary oaths that appeal to God, far stronger the bond upon my soul than the mean surprise, the covert tricks, the insult and the mocking fraud. But as I rode on, the oath pursued me—pale spectres mounted behind me on my steed, ghastly fingers pointed from the welkin; and then suddenly, O my father—I who, sincere in my simple faith, had, as thou knowest too well, never bowed submissive conscience to priest and Church—then suddenly I felt the might of some power, surer guide than that haughty conscience which had so in the hour of need betrayed me! Then I recognized that supreme tribunal, that mediator between Heaven and man, to which I might come with the dire secret of my soul, and say, as I say now, on my bended knee, O father—father—bid me die, or absolve me from my oath!"

Then Alred rose erect, and replied, "Did I need subterfuge, O son, I would say, that William himself hath released thy bond, in detaining the hostage against the spirit of the guilty compact; that in the very words themselves of the oath, lies the release—'*if God aid thee.*' God aids no child to parricide—and thou art England's child! But all school-casuistry is here a meanness. Plain is the law, that oaths extorted by compulsion, through fraud and in fear, the Church hath the right to loose: plainer still the law of God and of man, than an oath to commit crime is a deadlier sin to keep than to forfeit. Wherefore, not absolving thee from the misdeed of a vow that, if trusting more to God's providence and less to man's vain strength and dim wit, thou wouldst never have uttered even for England's sake—leaving her to the angels;—not, I say, absolving thee from that sin, but pausing yet to decide what penance and atonement to fix to its committal, I do in the name of the Power whose priest I am, forbid thee to fulfil the oath; I do release and absolve thee from all obligation thereto. And if in this I exceed my authority as Romish priest, I do but accomplish my duties as living man. To these gray hairs I take the sponsorship. Before this holy cross, kneel, O my son, with me, and pray that a life of truth and virtue may atone the madness of an hour."

So by the crucifix knelt the warrior and the priest.

CHAPTER II.

All other thought had given way to Harold's impetuous yearning to throw himself upon the Church, to hear his doom from the purest and wisest of its Saxon preachers. Had the prelate deemed his vow irrefragable, he would have died the Roman's death, rather than live the traitor's life; and strange indeed was the revolution created in this man's character, that he, "so self-dependent," he who had hitherto deemed himself his sole judge below of cause and action, now felt the whole life of his life committed

to the word of a cloistered shaveling. All other thought had given way to that fiery impulse—home, mother, Edith, king, power, policy, ambition! Till the weight was from his soul, he was as an outlaw in his native land. But when the next sun rose, and that awful burthen was lifted from his heart and his being—when his own calm sense, returning, sanctioned the fiat of the priest,—when, though with deep shame and rankling remorse at the memory of the vow, he yet felt exonerated, not from the guilt of having made, but the deadlier guilt of fulfilling it, —all the objects of existence resumed their natural interest, softened and chastened, but still vivid in the heart restored to humanity. But from that time, Harold's stern philosophy and stoic ethics were shaken to the dust, re-created, as it were, by the breath of religion, he adopted its tenets even after the fashion of his age. The secret of his shame, the error of his conscience, humbled him. Those unlettered monks whom he had so despised, how had he lost the right to stand aloof from their control! how had his wisdom, and his strength, and his courage, met unguarded the hour of temptation!

Yes, might the time come, when England could spare him from her side! when he, like Sweyn the outlaw, could pass a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre, and there, as the creed of the age taught, win full pardon for the single lie of his truthful life, and regain the old peace of his stainless conscience!

There are sometimes event and season in the life of man the hardest and most rational, when he is driven perforce to faith the most implicit and submissive; as the storm drives the wings of the petrel over a measureless sea, till it falls tame, and rejoicing at refuge, on the sails of some lonely ship. Seasons when difficulties, against which reason seems stricken into palsy, leave him bewildered in dismay—when darkness, which experience cannot pierce, wraps the conscience, as sudden night wraps the traveller in the desert—when error entangles his feet in its inextricable web—when, still desirous of the right, he sees before him but a choice of evil; and the Angel of the Past, with a flaming sword, closes on him the gates of the Future. Then, Faith flashes on him, with a light from the cloud. Then, he clings to Prayer as a drowning wretch to the plank. Then, that solemn authority which clothes the Priest, as the interpreter between the soul and the Divinity, seizes on the heart that trembles with terror and joy; then, that mysterious recognition of Atonement, of sacrifice, of purifying lustration (mystery which lies hid in the core of all religions), smooths the frown on the Past, removes the flaming sword from the Future. The Orestes escapes from the hounding Furies, and follows the oracle to the spot where the cleansing dews shall descend on the expiated guilt.

He who hath never known in himself, nor marked in another, such strange crisis in human fate, cannot judge of the strength and the weakness it bestows. But till he can so judge, the spiritual part of all history is to him a blank scroll, a sealed volume. He cannot comprehend what drove the fierce Heathen, cowering and humbled, into the field of the Church; what peopled Egypt with eremites; what lined the roads of Europe and Asia with pilgrim homicides; what, in the elder world, while Jove yet reigned on Olympus, is couched in the dim traditions of the expiation of Apollo, the joy-god, descending into Hades; or why the sinner went blithe and light-hearted from the healing lustrations of Eleusis. In all these solemn riddles of the Jove world, and the Christ's, is involved the imperious necessity that man hath of repentance and atonement: through their clouds, as a rainbow, shines the covenant that reconciles the God and the man.

Now Life with strong arms plucked the reviving Harold to itself. Already the news of his return had spread through the city, and his chamber soon swarmed with joyous welcomes and anxious friends. But the first congratulations over, each had tidings, that claimed his instant attention, to relate. His absence had sufficed to loosen half the links of that ill-woven empire.

All the North was in arms. Northumbria had revolted, as one man, from the tyrannous cruelty of Tostig; the insurgents had marched upon York; Tostig had fled in dismay, none as yet knew whither. The sons of Algar had sallied forth from their Mercian fortresses, and were now in the ranks of the Northumbrians, who it was rumored had selected Morcar (the elder) in the place of Tostig.

Amidst these disasters, the King's health was fast decaying; his mind seemed bewildered and distraught; dark ravings of evil portent that had escaped from his lip in his mystic reveries and visions, had spread abroad, bandied with all natural exaggerations, from lip to lip. The country was in one state of gloomy and vague apprehension.

But all would go well, now Harold the great Earl—Harold the stout, and the wise, and the loved—had come back to his native land!

In feeling himself thus necessary to England,—all eyes, all hopes, all hearts turned to him, and to him alone,—Harold shook the evil memories from his soul, as a lion shakes the dews from his name. His intellect, that seemed to have burned dim and through smoke in scenes unfamilliar to its exercise, rose at once equal to the occasion. His words reassured the most despondent. His orders were prompt and decisive. While, to and fro, went forth his bodes and his riders, he himself leaped on his horse, and rode fast to Havering.

At length, that sweet and lovely retreat broke on his sight, as a bower through the bloom of a garden. This was Edward's favorite abode: he had built it himself for his private devotions, allured by its woody solitudes and the gloom of its copious verdure. Here it was said, that once at night, wandering through the silent glades, and musing on heaven, the loud song of the nightingales had disturbed his devotions; with vexed and impatient soul, he had prayed that the music might be stilled: and since then, never more the nightingale was heard in the shades of Havering!

Threading the woodland, melancholy yet glorious with the hues of autumn, Harold reached the low and humble gate of the timber edifice, all covered with creepers and young ivy; and in a few moments more he stood in the presence of the King.

Edward raised himself with pain from the couch on which he was reclined,* beneath a canopy supported by columns and surmounted by carved symbols of the bell towers of Jerusalem; and his languid face brightened at the sight of Harold. Behind the King stood a man with a Danish battle-axe in his hand, the captain of the royal house-carles, who, on a sign from the King, withdrew.

"Thou art come back, Harold," said Edward then, in a feeble voice; and the Earl drawing near, was grieved and shocked at the alteration of his face. "Thou art come back, to aid this benumbed hand, from which the earthly sceptre is about to fall. Hush! for it is so, and I rejoice." Then examining Harold's features, yet pale with recent emotions, and now saddened by sympathy with the King, he resumed:—"Well, man of this world, that went forth confiding in thine own strength, and in the faith of men of the world like thee,—well, were my warnings prophetic, or art thou contented with thy mission?"

"Alas!" said Harold, mournfully. "Thy wisdom was greater than mine, O King; and dread the snares laid for me and our native land, under pretext of a promise made by thee to Count William, that he should reign in England, should he be your survivor."

Edward's face grew troubled and embarrassed. "Such promise," he said falteringly, "when I knew not the laws of England, nor that a realm could not pass like house and hyde, by a man's single testament, might well escape from my thoughts, never too bent upon earthly affairs. But I marvel not that my cousin's mind is more tenacious and mundane. And verily, in those vague words, and from thy visit, I see the Future dark with fate and crimson with blood."

Then Edward's eyes grew locked and set, staring into space; and even that reverie, though it awed him, relieved Harold of much disquietude, for he rightly conjectured, that on waking from it Edward would press him no more as to those details, and dilemmas of conscience, of which he felt that the arch-worshipper of relics was no fitting judge.

When the king, with a heavy sigh, evinced return from the world of vision, he stretched forth to Harold his wan, transparent hand, and said:—

"Thou seest the ring on this finger; it comes to me from above, a merciful token to prepare my soul for death. Perchance thou mayest have heard that once an aged pilgrim stopped me on my way from God's House, and asked for alms—and I, having

* Bayeux tapestry.

nought else on my person to bestow, drew from my finger a ring, and gave it to him, and the old man went his way, blessing me."

"I mind me well of thy gentle charity," said the Earl; "for the pilgrim bruited it abroad as he passed, and much talk was there of it."

The King smiled faintly. "Now this was years ago. It so chanced this year, that certain Englishers, on their way from the Holy Land, fell in with two pilgrims—and these last questioned them much of me. And one, with face venerable and benign, drew forth a ring and said, 'When thou reachest England, give thou this to the King's own hand, and say, by this token, that on Twelfth-Day Eve he shall be with me. For what he gave to me, will I prepare recompense without bound; and already the saints deck for the new comer the halls where the worm never gnaws and the moth never frets.' 'And who,' asked my subjects amazed, 'who shall we say, speaketh thus to us?' And the pilgrim answered, 'He on whose breast leaned the Son of God, and my name is John!'* Wherewith the apparition vanished. This is the ring I gave to the pilgrim; on the fourteenth night from thy parting, miraculously returned to me. Wherefore, Harold, my time here is brief, and I rejoice that thy coming delivers me up from the cares of state to the preparation of my soul for the joyous day."

Harold, suspecting under this incredible mission some wily device of the Norman, who, by thus warning Edward (of whose precarious health he was well aware), might induce his timorous conscience to take steps for the completion of the old promise,—Harold, we say, thus suspecting, in vain endeavored to combat the King's presentiments, but Edward interrupted him, with displeased firmness of look and tone—

"Come not thou, with thy human reasonings, between my soul and the messenger divine; but rather nerve and prepare thyself for the dire calamities that lie greeding in the days to come! Be thine, things temporal. All the land is in rebellion. Anlaf, whom thy coming dismissed, hath just wearied me with sad tales of bloodshed and ravage. Go and hear him;—go hear the bodes of thy brother Tostig, who wait without in our hall;—go, take axe, and take shield, and the men of earth's war, and do justice and right; and on thy return thou shalt see with what rapture sublime a Christian King can soar aloft from his throne! Go!"

More moved, and more softened, than in the former day he had been with Edward's sincere, if fanatical piety, Harold, turning aside to conceal his face, said,—

"Would, O royal Edward, that my heart, admidst worldly cares, were as pure and serene as thine! But, at least, what erring mortal may do to guard this realm, and face the evils thou foreseest in the Far—that will I do; and, perchance then, in my dying hour, God's pardon and peace may descend on me!" He spoke, and went.

The accounts he received from Anlaf (a veteran Anglo-Dane), were indeed more alarming than he had yet heard. Morcar, the bold son of Algar, was already proclaimed, by the rebels, Earl of Northumbria; the shires of Nottingham, Derby, and Lincoln, had poured forth their hardy Dane populations on his behalf. All Mercia was in arms under his brother Edwin; and many of the Cymrian chiefs had already joined the ally of the butchered Gryffyth.

Not a moment did the Earl lose in proclaiming the Her-bann; sheaves of arrows were splintered, and the fragments, as announcing the War-Fyrd, were sent from thegn to thegn, and town to town. Fresh messengers were despatched to Gurth to collect the whole force of his own earldom, and haste by quick marches to London; and, these preparations made, Harold returned to the metropolis, and with a heavy heart sought his mother, as his next care.

Githa was already prepared for his news; for Haco had of his own accord gone to break the first shock of disappointment. There was in this youth a noiseless sagacity that seemed ever provident for Harold. With his sombre, smileless cheek, and gloom of beauty, bowed as if beneath the weight of some invisible doom, he had already become linked indissolubly with the Earl's

* Ail. *de Vit. Edw.*—Many other chroniclers mention this legend, of which the stones of Westminster Abbey itself prated, in the statues of Edward and the Pilgrim, placed over the arch in Dean's Yard.

fate, as its angel,—but as its angel of darkness?

To Harold's intense relief, Githa stretched forth her hands as he entered, and said, "Thou hast failed me, but against thy will! Grieve not; I am content!"

"Now our Lady be blessed, mother—"

"I have told her," said Haco, who was standing, with arms folded, by the fire, the blaze of which reddened fitfully his hueless countenance with its raven air; "I have told thy mother that Wolnoth loves his captivity, and enjoys the cage. And the lady hath had comfort in my words."

"Not in thine only, son of Sweyn, but in those of fate: for before thy coming I prayed against the long blind yearning of my heart, prayed that Wolnoth might *not* cross the sea with his kinsmen."

"How!" exclaimed the Earl, astonished.

Githa took his arm, and led him to the farther end of the ample chamber, as if out of the hearing of Haco, who turned his face towards the fire, and gazed into the fierce blaze with musing, unwinking eyes.

"Couldst thou think, Harold, that in thy journey, that on the errand of so great fear and hope, I could sit brooding in my chair, and count the stitches on the tremulous hangings? No; day by day have I sought the lore of Hilda, and at night I have watched with her by the fount, and the elm, and the tomb; and I know that thou hast gone through dire peril; the prison, the war, and the snare; and I know also, that his Fylgia hath saved the life of my Wolnoth; for had he returned to his native land, he had returned but to a bloody grave!"

"Says Hilda this?" said the Earl, thoughtfully.

"So say the Vala, the rune, and the Scinlæca! and such is the doom that now darkens the brow of Haco! Seest thou not that the hand of death is in the hush of the smileless lip, and the glance of the unjoyous eye?"

"Nay, it is but the thought born to captive youth, and nurtured in solitary dreams. Thou hast seen Hilda?—and Edith, my mother? Edith is—"

"Well," said Githa, kindly, for she sympathized with that love which Godwin would have condemned, "though she grieved deeply after thy departure, and would sit for hours gazing into space, and moaning. But even ere Hilda divined thy safe return, Edith knew it; I was beside her at the time; she started up, and cried—'Harold is in England!'—'How?—Why thinkest thou so?' said I. And Edith answered, 'I feel it by the touch of the earth, by the breath of the air.' This is more than love, Harold. I knew two twins who had the same instinct of each other's comings and goings, and were present each to each even when absent: Edith is twin to thy soul. Thou goest to her now, Harold: thou wilt find there thy sister Thyra. The child hath drooped of late, and I besought Hilda to revive her, with herb and charm. Thou wilt come back, ere thou departest to aid Tostig, thy brother, and tell me how Hilda hath prospered with my ailing child?"

"I will, my mother. Be cheered!—Hilda is a skilful nurse. And now bless thee, that thou hast not reproached me that my mission failed to fulfil my promise. Welcome even our kinswoman's sayings, sith they comfort thee for the loss of thy darling!"

Then Harold left the room, mounted his steed, and rode through the town towards the bridge. He was compelled to ride slowly through the streets, for he was recognized; and cheapman and mechanic rushed from house and from stall to hail the Man of the Land and the Time.

"All is safe now in England, for Harold is come back!" They seemed joyous as the children of the mariner, when, with wet garments, he struggles to shore through the storm. And kind and loving were Harold's looks and brief words, as he rode with vailed bonnet through the swarming streets.

At length he cleared the town and the bridge; and the yellowing boughs of the orchards drooped over the road towards the Roman home, when, as he spurred his steed, he heard behind him hoofs as in pursuit, looked back, and beheld Haco. He drew rein,—"What wantest thou, my nephew?"

"Thee!" answered Haco, briefly, as he gained his side. "Thy companionship."

"Thanks, Haco; but I pray thee to stay

in my mother's house, for I would fain ride alone."

"Spurn me not from thee, Harold! This England is to me the land of the stranger; in thy mother's house I feel but the more the orphan. Henceforth I have devoted to thee my life! And my life my dead and dread father hath left to thee, as a doom or a blessing; wherefore cleave I to thy side; —cleave we in life and in death to each other!"

An undefined and cheerless thrill shot through the Earl's heart as the youth spoke thus; and the remembrance that Haco's counsel had first induced him to abandon his natural hardy and gallant manhood, meet wile by wile, and thus suddenly entangled him in his own meshes, had already mingled an inexpressible bitterness with his pity and affection for his brother's son. But, struggling against that uneasy sentiment, as unjust towards one to whose counsel—however sinister, and now repented—he probably owed, at least, his safety and deliverance, he replied gently,—

"I accept thy trust and thy love, Haco! Ride with me, then; but pardon a dull comrade, for when the soul communes with itself the lip is silent."

"True," said Haco, "and I am no babbler. Three things are ever silent: Thought, Destiny, and the Grave."

Each then, pursuing his own fancies, rode on fast, and side by side; the long shadows of declining day struggling with a sky of unusual brightness, and thrown from the dim forest trees and the distant hillocks. Alternately through shade and through light rode they on; the bulls gazing on them from holt and glade, and the boom of the bittern sounding in its peculiar mournfulness of tone as it rose from the dank pools that glistened in the western sun.

It was always by the rear of the house, where stood the ruined temple, so associated with the romance of his life, that Harold approached the home of the Vala; and as now the hillock, with its melancholy diadem of stones, came in view, Haco for the first time broke the silence.

"Again—as in a dream!" he said, abruptly. "Hill, ruin, grave-mound—but where the tall image of the mighty one?"

"Hast thou then seen this spot before?" asked the Earl.

"Yea, as an infant here was I led by my father Sweyn; here too, from thy house yonder, dim seen through the fading leaves, on the eve before I left this land for the Norman, here did I wander alone; and there, by that altar, did the great Vala of the North chaunt her runes for my future."

"Alas! thou too!" murmured Harold; and then he asked aloud, "What said she?"

"That thy life and mine crossed each other in the skein; that I should save thee from a great peril, and share with thee a greater."

"Ah, youth," answered Harold, bitterly, "these vain prophecies of human wit guard the soul from no danger. They mislead us by riddles which our hot hearts interpret according to their own desires. Keep thou fast to youth's simple wisdom, and trust only to the pure spirit and the watchful God."

He suppressed a groan as he spoke, and springing from his steed, which he left loose, advanced up the hill. When he had gained the height, he halted, and made sign to Haco, who had also dismounted, to do the same. Half way down the side of the slope which faced the ruined peristyle, Haco beheld a maiden, still young, and of beauty surpassing all that the court of Normandy boasted of female loveliness. She was seated on the sward;—while a girl younger and scarcely indeed grown into womanhood, reclined at her feet, and leaning her cheek upon her hand, seemed hushed in listening attention. In the face of the younger girl Haco recognized Thyra, the last born of Githa, though he had but once seen her before—the day ere he left England for the Norman court—for the face of the girl was but little changed, save that the eye was more mournful, and the cheek was paler.

And Harold's betrothed was singing, in the still autumn air, to Harold's sister. The song chosen was on that subject the most popular with the Saxon poets, the mystic life, death and resurrection of the fabled Phœnix, and this rhymeless song, in its old native flow, may yet find some grace in the modern ear.

THE LAY OF THE PHŒNIX.*

"Shineth far hence—so
Sing the wise elders—
Far to the fire-east
The fairest of lands.

"Daintily dight is that
Dearest of joy fields;
Breezes all balm-y-filled
Glide through its groves.

"There to the blest, ope
The high doors of heaven,
Sweetly sweep earthward
Their wavelets of song.

"Frost robes the sward not,
Rusheth no hail-steel;
Wind-cloud ne'er wanders,
Ne'er falleth the rain.

"Warding the woodholt,
Girt with gay wonder,
Sheen with the plumy shine,
Phœnix abides.

"Lord of the Lleod,†
Whose home is the air,
Winters a thousand
Abideth the bird.

"Hapless and heavy then
Waxeth the hazy wing;
Year-worn and old in the
Whirl of the earth.

"Then the high holt-top,
Mounting, the bird soars;
There, where the winds sleep,
He buildeth a nest;—

"Gums the most precious, and
Balms of the sweetest,
Spices and odors, he
Weaves in the nest.

"There, in that sun-ark, lo,
Waiteth he wistful;
Summer comes smiling, lo,
Rays smite the pile!

"Burden'd with eld-years, and
Weary with slow time,
Slow in his odor-nest
Burneth the bird.

"Up from those ashes, then,
Springeth a rare fruit;
Deep in the rare fruit
There coileth a worm.

"Weaving bliss-meshes
Around and around it,
Silent and blissful, the
Worm worketh on.

"Lo, from the airy web,
Blooming and brightsome,
Young and exulting, the
Phœnix breaks forth.

"Round him the birds troop,
Singing and hailing;
Wings of all glories
Engarland the king.

"Hymning and hailing,
Through forest and sun-air,
Hymning and hailing,
And speaking him 'King.'

"High flies the phœnix,
Escaped from the worm-web,
He soars in the sunlight,
He bathes in the dew.

"He visits his old haunts,
The holt and the sun-hill;
The founts of his youth, and
The fields of his love.

"The stars in the welkin,
The blooms on the earth,
Are glad in his gladness,
Are young in his youth.

"While round him the birds troop, the
Hosts of the Himmel,*
Blisses of music, and
Glories of wings;

"Hymning and hailing,
And filling the sun-air
With music, and glory,
And praise of the King."

As the lay ceased, Thyra said,—

"Ah, Edith, who would not brave the funeral pyre to live again like the phœnix!"

"Sweet sister mine," answered Edith, "the singer doth mean to image out in the phœnix the rising of our Lord, in whom we all live again."

And Thyra said mournfully,—

"But the phœnix sees once more the haunts of his youth—the things and places dear to him in his life before. Shall we do the same, O Edith?"

"It is the persons we love that make beautiful the haunts we have known," an-

* This ancient Saxon lay, apparently of the date of the tenth or eleventh century, may be found, admirably translated by Mr. George Stephens, in the Archæologia, vol. xxx. p. 259. In the text the poem is much abridged, reduced into rhythm, and in some stanzas wholly altered from the original. But it is, nevertheless, greatly indebted to Mr. Stephens's translation, from which several lines are borrowed verbatim. The more careful reader will note the great aid given to a rhymeless metre by *alliteration*. I am not sure that this old Saxon mode of verse might not be profitably restored to our national muse.

† People.

* Heaven.

swered the betrothed. "Those persons at least we shall behold again, and wherever *they* are—there is heaven."

Harold could restrain himself no longer. With one bound he was at Edith's side, and with one wild cry of joy he clasped her to his heart.

"I knew that thou wouldst come to-night—I knew it, Harold," murmured the betrothed.

CHAPTER III.

While, full of themselves, Harold and Edith wandered, hand in hand, through the neighboring glades—while into that breast which had forestalled, at least, in this pure and sublime union, the wife's privilege to soothe and console, the troubled man poured out the tale of the sore trial from which he had passed with defeat and shame,—Haco drew near to Thyra, and sate down by her side. Each was strangely attracted towards the other; there was something congenial in the gloom which they shared in common: though in the girl the sadness was soft and resigned, in the youth it was stern and solemn. They conversed in whispers, and their talk was strange for companions so young; for, whether suggested by Edith's song, or the neighborhood of the Saxon grave-stone, which gleamed on their eyes, gray and wan, through the crommell, the theme they selected was of death. As if fascinated, as children often are, by the terrors of the Dark King, they dwelt on those images with which the northern fancy has associated the eternal rest,—on the shroud and the worm, and the mouldering bones—on the gibbering ghost, and the sorcerer's spell that could call the spectre from the grave. They talked of the pain of the parting soul, parting while earth was yet fair, youth fresh, and joy not yet ripened from the blossom—of the wistful lingering look which the glazing eyes would give to the latest sunlight it should behold on earth; and then pictured the shivering and naked soul, forced from the reluctant clay, wandering through cheerless space to the intermediate tortures, which the Church taught that none were so pure as not for a while to undergo; and hearing, as it wandered, the knell of the muffled bells and the burst of unavailing prayer. At length Haco paused abruptly, and said,—

"But thou, cousin, hast before thee love and sweet life, and these discourses are not for thee."

Thyria shook her head mournfully,—

"Not so, Haco; for when Hilda consulted the runes, while, last night, she mingled the herbs for my pain, which rests ever hot and sharp here," and the girl laid her hand on her breast, "I saw that her face grew dark and overcast; and I felt, as I looked, that my doom was set. And when thou didst come so noiselessly to my side, with thy sad, cold eyes, O Haco, methought I saw the Messenger of Death. But thou art strong, Haco, and life will be long for thee; let us talk of life."

Haco stooped down and pressed his lips upon the girl's pale forehead.

"Kiss me too, Thyra."

The child kissed him, and they sate silent and close by each other while the sun set.

And as the stars rose, Harold and Edith joined them. Harold's face was serene in the starlight, for the pure soul of his betrothed had breathed peace into his own; and, in his willing superstition, he felt as if, now restored to his guardian angel, the dead men's bones had released their unhallowed hold.

But suddenly Edith's hand trembled in his, and her form shuddered.—Her eyes were fixed upon those of Haco.

"Forgive me, young kinsman, that I forgot thee so long," said the Earl. "This is my brother's son, Edith; thou hast not, that I remember, seen him before?"

"Yes, yes;" said Edith, falteringly.

"When, and where?"

Edith's soul answered the question, "*In a dream;*" but her lips were silent.

And Haco, rising, took her by the hand, while the Earl turned to his sister—that sister whom he was pledged to send to the Norman court; and Thyra said plaintively,—

"Take me in thine arms, Harold, and wrap thy mantle round me, for the air is cold."

The Earl lifted the child to his breast, and gazed on her cheek long and wistfully; then

questioning her tenderly, he took her within the house; and Edith followed with Haco.

"Is Hilda within?" asked the son of Sweyn.

"Nay, she hath been in the forest since noon," answered Edith with an effort, for she could not recover her awe of his presence.

"Then," said Haco, halting at the threshold, "I will go across the woodland to your house, Harold, and prepare your ceorls for your coming."

"I shall tarry here till Hilda returns," answered Harold, "and it may be late in the night ere I reach home; but Sexwolf already hath my orders. At sunrise we return to London, and thence we march on the insurgents."

"All shall be ready. Farewell, noble Edith; and thou, Thyra my cousin, one kiss more to our meeting again."

The child fondly held out her arms to him, and as she kissed his cheek whispered,—

"In the grave, Haco!"

The young man drew his mantle around him, and moved away. But he did not mount his steed, which still grazed by the road; while Harold's, more familiar with the place, had found its way to the stall; nor did he take his path through the glades to the house of his kinsman. Entering the Druid temple, he stood musing by the Teuton tomb.

The night grew deep and deeper, the stars more luminous, and the air more hushed, when a voice close at his side, said clear and abrupt,—

"What does Youth the restless, by Death the still?"

It was the peculiarity of Haco, that nothing ever seemed to startle or surprise him. In that brooding boyhood, the solemn, quiet, and sad experience all fore-armed, of age, had something in it terrible and preternatural; so without lifting his eyes from the stone, he answered,—

"How sayest thou, O Hilda, that the dead are still?"

Hilda placed her hand on his shoulder, and stooped to look into his face.

"Thy rebuke is just, son of Sweyn. In Time, and in the Universe, there is no stillness! Through all eternity the state impossible to the soul is repose!—So again thou art in thy native land?"

"And for what end, Prophetess? I remember, when but an infant, who till then had enjoyed the common air and the daily sun, thou didst rob me evermore of childhood and youth. For thou didst say to my father, that 'dark was the woof of my fate, and that its most glorious hour should be its last!'"

"But thou wert surely too childlike, (I see thee now as thou wert then, stretched on the grass, and playing with thy father's falcon!) —too childlike to heed my words."

"Does the new ground reject the germs of the sower, or the young heart the first lessons of wonder and awe? Since then, Prophetess, Night hath been my comrade, and Death my familiar. Rememberest thou again the hour when, stealing, a boy, from Harold's house in his absence—the night ere I left my land —I stood on this mound by thy side? Then did I tell thee that the sole soft thought that relieved the bitterness of my soul, when all the rest of my kinsfolk seemed to behold in me but the heir of Sweyn, the outlaw and homicide, was the love that I bore to Harold; but that that love itself was mournful and bodeful as the hwata * of distant sorrow. And thou didst take me, O Prophetess, to thy bosom, and thy cold kiss touched my lips and my brow; and there, beside this altar and grave-mound, by leaf and by water, by staff and by song, thou didst bid me take comfort; for that as the mouse gnawed the toils of the lion, so the exile obscure should deliver from peril the pride and the prince of my House—that, from that hour with the skein of his fate should mine be entwined; and his fate was that of kings and of kingdoms. And then, when the joy flushed my cheek, and methought youth came back in warmth to the night of my soul—then, Hilda, I asked thee if my life would be spared till I had redeemed the name of my father. Thy seidstaff passed over the leaves that, burning with fire-sparks, symbolled the life of the man, and from the third leaf the flame leaped up and died; and again a voice from thy breast, hollow, as if borne from a hill-top afar, made answer, 'At thine entrance to

* Omen.

manhood life bursts into blaze, and shrivels up into ashes.' So I knew that the doom of the infant still weighed unannealed on the years of the man; and I come here to my native land as to glory and the grave. But," said the young man, with a wild enthusiasm, "still with mine links the fate which is loftiest in England; and the rill and the river shall rush in one to the Terrible Sea."

"I know not that," answered Hilda, pale, as if in awe of herself: "for never yet hath the rune, or the fount, or the tomb, revealed to me clear and distinct the close of the great course of Harold; only know I through his own stars his glory and greatness; and where glory is dim, and greatness is menaced, I know it but from the stars of others, the rays of whose influence blend with his own. So long, at least, as the fair and the pure one keeps watch in the still House of Life, the dark and the troubled one cannot wholly prevail. For Edith is given to Harold as the Fylgia, that noiselessly blesses and saves: and thou—" Hilda checked herself, and lowered her hood over her face, so that it suddenly became invisible.

"And I?" asked Haco, moving near to her side.

"Away, son of Sweyn; thy feet trample the grave of the mighty dead!"

Then Hilda lingered no longer, but took her way towards the house. Haco's eye followed her in silence. The cattle, grazing in the great space of the crumbling peristyle, looked up as she passed; the watch dogs, wandering through the star-lit columns, came snorting round their mistress. And when she had vanished within the house, Haco turned to his steed,—

"What matters," he murmured, "the answer which the Vala cannot or dare not give? To me is not destined the love of woman, nor the ambition of life. All I know of human affection binds me to Harold; all I know of human ambition is to share in his fate. This love is strong as hate, and terrible as doom,—it is jealous, it admits no rival. As the shell and the sea-weed interlaced together, we are dashed on the rushing surge; whither? oh, whither?"

CHAPTER IV.

"I TELL thee, Hilda," said the Earl, impatiently, "I tell thee that I renounce henceforth all faith save in Him whose ways are concealed from our eyes. Thy seid and thy galdra have not guarded me against peril, nor armed me against sin. Nay, perchance—but peace: I will no more tempt the dark art, I will no more seek to disentangle the awful truth from the juggling lie. All so foretold me I will seek to forget,—hope from no prophecy, fear from no warning. Let the soul go to the future under the shadow of God!"

"Pass on thy way as thou wilt, its goal is the same, whether seen or unmarked. Peradventure thou art wise," said the Vala, gloomily.

"For my country's sake, heaven be my witness, not my own," resumed the Earl, "I have blotted my conscience and sullied my truth. My country alone can redeem me, by taking my life as a thing hallowed evermore to her service. Selfish ambition do I lay aside, selfish power shall tempt me no more; lost is the charm that I beheld in a throne, and, save for Edith—"

"No! not even for Edith," cried the betrothed, advancing, "not even for Edith shalt thou listen to other voice than that of thy country and thy soul."

The Earl turned round abruptly, and his eyes were moist.

"O Hilda," he cried, "see henceforth my only Vala; let that noble heart alone interpret to us the oracles of the future."

The next day Harold returned with Haco and a numerous train of his house-carles to the city. Their ride was as silent as that of the day before; but on reaching Southwark, Harold turned away from the bridge towards the left, gained the river side, and dismounted at the house of one of his lithsmen (a frankling, or freed ceorl). Leaving there his horse, he summoned a boat, and, with Haco, was rowed over towards the fortified palace which then rose towards the west of London, jutting into the Thames, and which seems to have formed the outwork of the old Roman city. The palace, of remotest antiquity, and blending all work and architecture, Roman, Saxon, and Danish, had been

repaired by Canute; and from a high window in the upper story, where were the royal apartments, the body of the traitor Edric Streone (the founder of the house of Godwin) had been thrown into the river.

"Whither go we, Harold?" asked the son of Sweyn.

"We go to visit the young Atheling, the natural heir to the Saxon throne," replied Harold in a firm voice. "He lodges in the old palace of our kings."

"They say in Normandy that the boy is imbecile."

"That is not true," returned Harold. "I will present thee to him,—judge."

Haco mused a moment and said,—

"Methinks I divine thy purpose; is it not formed on the sudden, Harold?"

"It was the counsel of Edith," answered Harold, with evident emotion. "And yet, if that counsel prevail, I may lose the power to soften the Church and to call her mine."

"So thou wouldest sacrifice even Edith for thy country."

"Since I have sinned, methinks I could," said the proud man, humbly.

The boat shot into a little creek, or rather canal, which then ran inland, beside the black and rotting walls of the fort. The two Earl-born leapt ashore, passed under a Roman arch, entered a court the interior of which was rudely filled up by early Saxon habitations of rough timber work, already, since the time of Canute, falling into decay (as all things did which came under the care of Edward), and mounting a stair that ran along the outside of the house, gained a low narrow door, which stood open. In the passage within were one or two of the King's house-carles who had been assigned to the young Atheling, with liveries of blue and Danish axes, and some four or five German servitors, who had attended his father from the Emperor's court. One of these last ushered the noble Saxons into a low, forlorn ante-hall; and there, to Harold's surprise, he found Alred the Archbishop of York, and three thegns of high rank, and of lineage ancient and purely Saxon.

Alred approached Harold with a faint smile on his benign face;—

"Methinks, and may I think aright!—thou comest hither with the same purpose as myself, and yon noble thegns."

"And that purpose?"

"Is to see and to judge calmly if, despite his years, we may find in the descendant of the Ironsides such a prince as we may commend to our decaying King as his heir, and to the Witan as a chief fit to defend the land."

"Thou speakest the cause of my own coming. With your ears will I hear, with your eyes will I see; as ye judge, will judge I," said Harold, drawing the prelate towards the thegns, so that they might hear his answer.

The chiefs, who belonged to a party that had often opposed Godwin's House, had exchanged looks of fear and trouble when Harold entered; but at his words their frank faces showed equal surprise and pleasure.

Harold presented to them his nephew, with whose grave dignity of bearing beyond his years they were favorably impressed, though the good bishop sighed when he saw in his face the sombre beauty of the guilty sire. The group then conversed anxiously on the declining health of the King, the disturbed state of the realm, and the expediency, if possible, of uniting all suffrages in favor of the fittest successor. And in Harold's voice and manner, as in Harold's heart, there was nought that seemed conscious of his own mighty stake and just hopes in that election. But as time wore, the faces of the thegns grew overcast; proud men and great satraps* were they, and they liked it ill that the boy prince kept them so long in the dismal ante-room.

At length the German officer, who had gone to announce their coming, returned; and in words, intelligible indeed from the affinity between Saxon and German, but still disagreeably foreign to English ears, requested them to follow him into the presence of the Atheling.

In a room yet retaining the rude splendor with which it had been invested by Canute, a handsome boy, about the age of thirteen or fourteen, but seeming much younger, was engaged in the construction of a stuffed

* The Eastern word Satraps (*Satrapes*) made one of the ordinary and most inappropriate titles (borrowed, no doubt, from the Byzantine Court), by which the Saxons, in their Latinity, honored their simple nobles.

bird, a lure for a young hawk that stood blindfold on its perch. The employment made so habitual a part of the serious education of youth, that the thegns smoothed their brows at the sight, and deemed the boy worthily occupied. At another end of the room, a grave Norman priest was seated at a table on which were books and writing implements; he was the tutor commissioned by Edward to teach Norman tongue and saintly lore to the Atheling. A profusion of toys strewed the floor, and some children of Edgar's own age were playing with them. His little sister Margaret * was seated seriously, apart from all the other children, and employed in needle-work.

When Alred approached the Atheling, with a blending of reverent obeisance and paternal cordiality, the boy carelessly cried, in a barbarous jargon, half German, half Norman-French—

"There, come not too near, you scare my hawk. What are you doing? You trample my toys, which the good Norman bishop William sent me as a gift from the Duke. Art thou blind, man?"

"My son," said the prelate kindly, "these are the things of childhood—childhood ends sooner with princes than with common men. Leave thy lure, and thy toys, and welcome these noble thegns, and address them, so please you, in our own Saxon tongue."

"Saxon tongue!—language of villeins! not I. Little do I know of it, save to scold a ceorl or a nurse. King Edward did not tell me to learn Saxon, but Norman! and Godfroi yonder says, that if I know Norman well, Duke William will make me his knight. But I don't desire to learn anything more to-day." And the child turned peevishly from thegn and prelate.

The three Saxon lords interchanged looks of profound displeasure and proud disgust. But Harold, with an effort over himself, approached, and said winningly,—

"Edgar the Atheling, thou art not so young but thou knowest already that the great live for others. Wilt thou not be proud to live for this fair country, and these noble men, and to speak the language of Alfred the Great?"

"Alfred the Great! they always weary me with Alfred the Great," said the boy, pouting. "Alfred the Great, he is the plague of my life! if I am Atheling, men are to live for me, not I for them; and if you tease me any more, I will run away to Duke William in Rouen; Godfroi says I shall never be teased there!"

So saying, already tired of hawk and lure, the child threw himself on the floor with the other children, and snatched the toys from their hands.

The serious Margaret then rose quietly, and went to her brother, and said, in good Saxon,—

"Fie! if you behave thus, I shall call you NIDDERING!"

At the threat of that word, the vilest in the language—that word which the lowest ceorl would forfeit life rather than endure—a threat applied to the Atheling of England, the descendant of Saxon heroes—the three thegns drew close, and watched the boy, hoping to see that he would start to his feet with wrath and in shame.

"Call me what you will, silly sister," said the child, indifferently, "I am not so Saxon as to care for your ceorlish Saxon names."

"Enow," cried the proudest and greatest of the thegns, his very moustache curling with ire. "He who can be called niddering shall never be crowned king!"

"I don't want to be crowned king, rude man, with your laidly moustache; I want to be made knight, and have a banderol and baldric.—Go away!"

"We go, son," said Alred, mournfully.

And with slow and tottering step he moved to the door; there he halted, turned back,—and the child was pointing at him in mimicry, while Godfroi, the Norman tutor, smiled as in pleasure. The prelate shook his head, and the group gained again the ante-hall.

"Fit leader of bearded men! fit king for the Saxon land!" cried a thegn. "No more of your Atheling, Alred my father!"

"No more of him, indeed!" said the prelate, mournfully.

"It is but the fault of his nurture and rearing,—a neglected childhood, a Norman

* Afterwards married to Malcolm of Scotland, through whom, by the female line, the present royal dynasty of England assumes descent from the Anglo-Saxon kings.

tutor, German hirelings. We may remould yet the pliant clay," said Harold.

"Nay," returned Alred, "no leisure for such hopes, no time to undo what is done by circumstance, and, I fear, by nature. Ere the year is out the throne will stand empty in our halls."

"Who then," said Haco, abruptly, "who then,—(pardon the ignorance of youth wasted in captivity abroad!) who then, failing the Atheling, will save this realm from the Norman Duke, who, I know well, counts on it as the reaper on the harvest ripening to his sickle?"

"Alas, who then?" murmured Alred.

"Who then?" cried the tree thegns, with one voice, "why the worthiest, the wisest, the bravest! Stand forth, Harold the Earl, thou art the man!" And without awaiting his answer, they strode from the hall.

CHAPTER V.

Around Northampton lay the forces of Morcar, the choice of the Anglo-Dane men of Northumbria. Suddenly there was a shout as to arms from the encampment; and Morcar, the young Earl, clad in his link mail, save his helmet, came forth, and cried,—

"My men are fools to look that way for a foe; yonder lies Mercia, behind it the hills of Wales. The troops that come hitherward are those which Edwin my brother brings to our aid."

Morcar's words were carried into the host by his captains and warbodes, and the shout changed from alarm into joy. As the cloud of dust through which gleamed the spears of the coming force rolled away, and lay lagging behind the march of the host, there rode forth from the van two riders. Fast and far from the rest they rode, and behind them, fast as they could, spurred two others, who bore on high, one the pennon of Mercia, one the red lion of North Wales. Right to the embankment and palisade which begirt Morcar's camp rode the riders; and the head of the foremost was bare, and the guards knew the face of Edwin the Comely, Morcar's brother. Morcar stepped down from the mound on which he stood, and the brothers embraced amidst the halloos of the forces.

"And welcome, I pray thee," said Morcar, "our kinsman Caradoc, son of Gryffyth* the bold."

So Morcar reached his hand to Caradoc, stepson to his sister Aldyth, and kissed him on the brow, as was the wont of our fathers. The young and crownless prince was scarce out of boyhood, but already his name was sung by the bards, and circled in the halls of Gwynedd with the Hirlas horn; for he had harried the Saxon borders and given to fire and sword even the fortress of Harold himself.

But while these three interchanged salutations, and ere yet the mixed Mercians and Welch had gained the encampment, from a curve in the opposite road, towards Towcester and Dunstable, broke the flash of mail like a river of light, trumpets and fifes were heard in the distance; and all in Morcar's host stood hushed but stern, gazing anxious and afar, as the coming armament swept on. And from the midst were seen the Martlets and Cross of England's king, and the Tiger heads of Harold; banners which, seen together, had planted victory on every tower, on every field, towards which they had rushed on the winds.

Retiring, then, to the central mound, the chiefs of the insurgent force held their brief council.

The two young Earls, whatever their ancestral renown, being yet new themselves to fame and to power, were submissive to the Anglo-Dane chiefs, by whom Morcar had been elected. And these, on recognizing the standard of Harold, were unanimous in advice to send a peaceful deputation, setting forth their wrongs under Tostig, and the justice of their cause. "For the Earl," said Gamel Beorn (the head and front of that revolution), "is a just man, and one who would shed his own blood rather than that of any other free-born dweller in England; and he will do us right."

"What, against his own brother?" cried Edwin.

"Against his own brother, if we convince but his reason," returned the Anglo-Dane.

* By his first wife; Aldyth was his second.

And the other chiefs nodded assent. Caradoc's fierce eyes flashed fire; but he played with his torque, and spoke not.

Meanwhile, the vanguard of the King's force had defiled under the very walls of Northampton, between the town and the insurgents; and some of the light-armed scouts who went forth from Morcar's camp to gaze on the procession, with that singular fearlessness which characterized, at that period, the rival parties in civil war, returned to say that they had seen Harold himself in the foremost line, and that he was not in mail.

This circumstance the insurgent thegns received as a good omen; and, having already agreed on the deputation, about a score of the principal thegns of the north went sedately towards the hostile lines.

By the side of Harold,—armed in mail, with his face concealed by the strange Sicilian nose-piece used then by most of the Northern nations,—had ridden Tostig, who had joined the Earl on his march, with a scanty band of some fifty or sixty of his Danish house-carles. All the men throughout broad England that he could command or bribe to his cause, were those fifty or sixty hireling Danes. And it seemed that already there was dispute between the brothers, for Harold's face was flushed, and his voice stern, as he said, "Rate me as thou wilt, brother, but I cannot advance at once to the destruction of my fellow Englishmen without summons and attempt at treaty,—as has ever been the custom of our ancient heroes and our own House."

"By all the fiends of the North!" exclaimed Tostig, "it is foul shame to talk of treaty and summons to robbers and rebels. For what art thou here but for chastisement and revenge?"

"For justice and right, Tostig."

"Ha! thou comest not, then, to aid thy brother?"

"Yes, if justice and right are, as I trust, with him."

Before Tostig could reply, a line was suddenly cleared through the armed men, and, with bare heads, and a monk lifting the rood on high, amidst the procession advanced the Northumbrian Danes.

"By the red sword of St. Olave!" cried Tostig, "yonder come the traitors, Gamel Beorn and Gloneion! You will not hear them? If so, I will not stay to listen. I have but my axe for my answer to such knaves."

"Brother, brother, those men are the most valiant and famous chiefs in thine earldom. Go, Tostig, thou art not now in the mood to hear reason. Retire into the city; summon its gates to open to the king's flag. I will hear the men."

"Beware how thou judge, save in thy brother's favor!" growled the fierce warrior; and, tossing his arm on high with a contemptuous gesture, he spurred away towards the gates.

Then Harold, dismounting, stood on the ground, under a standard of his King, and round him came several of the Saxon chiefs, who had kept aloof during the conference with Tostig.

The Northumbrians approached, and saluted the Earl with grave courtesy.

Then Gamel Beorn began. But much as Harold had feared and foreboded as to the causes of complaint which Tostig had given to the Northumbrians, all fear, all foreboding, fell short of the horrors now deliberately unfolded; not only extortion of tribute the most rapacious and illegal, but murder the fiercest and most foul. Thegns of high birth, without offence or suspicion, but who had either excited Tostig's jealousy, or resisted his exactions, had been snared under peaceful pretexts into his castle,* and butchered in cold blood by his house-carles. The cruelties of the old heathen Danes seemed revived in the bloody and barbarous tale.

"And now," said the thegn, in conclusion, "canst thou condemn us that we rose?—no partial rising;—rose all Northumbria! At first but two hundred thegns; strong in our cause, we swelled into the might of a people. Our wrongs found sympathy beyond our province, for liberty spreads over human hearts as fire over a heath. Wherever we march, friends gather round us. Thou warrest not on a handful of rebels,—half England is with us!"—

"And ye,—thegns," answered Harold, "ye have ceased to war against Tostig your Earl. Ye war now against the King and the

* Flor. Wig.

Law. Come with your complaints to your Prince and your Witan, and, if they are just, ye are stronger than in yonder palisades and streets of steel."

"And so," said Gamel Beorn, with marked emphasis, "now *thou* art in England, O noble Earl,—so are we willing to come. But when thou wert absent from the land, justice seemed to abandon it to force and the battle-axe."

"I would thank you for your trust," answered Harold, deeply moved. "But justice in England rests not on the presence and life of a single man. And your speech I must not accept as a grace, for it wrongs both my King and his Council. These charges ye have made, but ye have not proved them. Armed men are not proofs; and granting that hot blood and mortal infirmity of judgment have caused Tostig to err against you and the right, think still of his qualities to reign over men whose lands, and whose rivers, lie ever exposed to the dread Northern sea-kings. Where will ye find a chief with arm as strong, and heart as dauntless? By his mother's side he is allied to your own lineage. And for the rest, if ye receive him back to his earldom, not only do I, Harold in whom you profess to trust, pledge full oblivion of the past, but I will undertake, in his name, that he shall rule you well for the future, according to the laws of King Canute."

"That will we not hear," cried the thegns, with one voice; while the tones of Gamel Beorn, rough with the rattling Danish burr, rose above all, "for we were born free. A proud and bad chief is by us not to be endured; we have learned from our ancestors to live free or die!"

A murmur, not of condemnation, at these words, was heard amongst the Saxon chiefs round Harold: and beloved and revered as he was, he felt that, had he the heart, he had scarce the power, to have coerced those warriors to march at once on their countrymen in such a cause. But foreseeing great evil in the surrender of his brother's interests, whether by lowering the King's dignity to the demands of armed force, or sending abroad in all his fierce passions a man so highly connected with Norman and Dane, so vindictive and so grasping, as Tostig, the Earl shunned further parley at that time and place. He appointed a meeting in the town with the chiefs; and requested them, meanwhile, to reconsider their demands, and at least shape them so as that they could be transmitted to the King, who was then on his way to Oxford.

It is in vain to describe the rage of Tostig, when his brother gravely repeated to him the accusations against him, and asked for his justification. Justification he could give not. His idea of law was but force, and by force alone he demanded now to be defended. Harold, then, wishing not alone to be judge in his brother's cause, referred further discussion to the chiefs of the various towns and shires, whose troops had swelled the War-Fyrd; and to them he bade Tostig plead his cause.

Vain as a woman, while fierce as a tiger, Tostig assented, and in that assembly he rose, his gonna all blazing with crimson and gold, his hair all curled and perfumed as for a banquet; and such, in a half barbarous day, the effect of person, especially when backed by warlike renown, that the Proceres were half disposed to forget, in admiration of the earl's surpassing beauty of form, the dark tales of his hideous guilt. But his passions hurrying him away ere he had gained the middle of his discourse, so did his own relation condemn himself, so clear became his own tyrannous misdeeds, that the Englishmen murmured aloud their disgust, and their impatience would not suffer him to close.

"Enough," cried Vebba, the blunt thegn from Saxon Kent; "it is plain that neither King nor Witan can replace thee in thine earldom. Tell us not farther of these atrocities; or, by're Lady, if the Northumbrians had chased thee not, we would."

"Take treasure and ship, and go to Baldwin in Flanders," said Thorold, a great Anglo-Dane from Lincolnshire, "for even Harold's name can scarce save thee from outlawry."

Tostig glared round on the assembly, and met but one common expression in the face of all.

"These are thy henchmen, Harold!" he said through his gnashing teeth; and, without vouchsafing farther word, strode from the council-hall.

That evening he left the town and hurried to tell to Edward the tale that had so miscarried with the chiefs. The next day, the Northumbrian delegates were heard; and they made the customary proposition in those cases of civil differences, to refer all matters to the King and the Witan; each party remaining under arms meanwhile.

This was finally acceded to. Harold repaired to Oxford, where the King (persuaded to the journey by Alred, foreseeing what would come to pass) had just arrived.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Witan was summoned in haste. Thither came the young earls Morcar and Edwin, but Caradoc, chafing at the thought of peace, retired into Wales with his wild band.

Now, all the great chiefs, spiritual and temporal, assembled in Oxford for the decree of that Witan on which depended the peace of England. The imminence of the time made the concourse of members entitled to vote in the assembly even larger than that which had met for the inlawry of Godwin. There was but one thought uppermost in the minds of men, to which the adjustment of an earldom, however mighty, was comparatively insignificant—viz. the succession of the kingdom. That thought turned instinctively and irresistibly to Harold.

The evident and rapid decay of the King; the utter failure of all male heir in the House of Cerdic, save only the boy Edgar; whose character (which throughout life remained puerile and frivolous) made the minority which excluded him from the throne seem cause rather for rejoicing than grief: and whose rights, even by birth, were not acknowledged by the general tenor of the Saxon laws, which did not recognize as heir to the crown the son of a father who had not himself been crowned; * — forebodings of coming evil and danger, originating in Edward's perturbed visions; revivals of obscure and till then forgotten prophecies, ancient as the days of Merlin; rumors, industriously fomented into certainty by Haco, whose whole soul seemed devoted to Harold's cause, of the intended claim of the Norman Count to the throne;—all concurred to make the election of a man matured in camp and council, doubly necessary to the safety of the realm.

Warm favorers, naturally, of Harold, were the genuine Saxon population, and a large part of the Anglo-Danish—all the thegns in his vast Earldom of Wessex, reaching to the southern and western coasts, from Sandwich and the mouth of the Thames to the Land's End in Cornwall; and including the free men of Kent, whose inhabitants even from the days of Cæsar had been considered in advance of the rest of the British population, and from the days of Hengist had exercised an influence that nothing save the warlike might of the Anglo-Danes counterbalanced. With Harold, too, were many of the thegns from his earlier earldom of East Anglia, comprising the county of Essex, great part of Hertfordshire, and so reaching into Cambridge, Huntingdon, Norfolk, and Ely. With him, were all the wealth, intelligence, and power of London, and most of the trading towns; with him all the veterans of the armies he had led; with him too, generally throughout the empire, was the force, less distinctly demarked, of public and national feeling.

Even the priests, save those immediately about the court, forgot, in the exigency of time, their ancient and deep-rooted dislike to Godwin's House; they remembered, at least, that Harold had never, in foray or feud, plundered a single convent; or in peace, and through plot, appropriated to himself a single hyde of Church land; and that was more than could have been said of any other earl of the age—even of Leofric the Holy. They caught, as a church must do, when so intimately, even in its illiterate errors, allied with the people as the old Saxon Church was, the popular enthusiasm. Abbot combined with thegn in zeal for Earl Harold.

* This truth has been overlooked by writers, who have maintained the Atheling's right as if incontestable. "An opinion prevailed," says Palgrave, "Eng. Commonwealth," pp. 559-560, "that if the Atheling was born before his father and mother were ordained to the royal dignity, the crown did not descend to the child of uncrowned ancestors." Our great legal historian quotes Eadmer, "De Vit. Sanct. Dunstan," p. 220, for the objection made to the succession of Edward the Martyr, on this score.

The only party that stood aloof was the one that espoused the claims of the young sons of Algar. But this party was indeed most formidable; it united all the old friends of the virtuous Leofric, of the famous Siward; it had a numerous party even in East Anglia (in which earldom Algar had succeeded Harold); it compromised nearly all the thegns in Mercia (the heart of the country), and the population of Northumbria; and it involved in its wide range the terrible Welch on the one hand, and the Scottish domain of the sub-king Malcolm, himself a Cumbrian, on the other, despite Malcolm's personal predilections for Tostig, to whom he was strongly attached.

But then the chiefs of this party, while at present they stood aloof, were all, with the exception perhaps of the young earls themselves, disposed, on the slightest encouragement, to blend their suffrage with the friends of Harold; and his praise was as loud on their lips as on those of the Saxons from Kent, or the burghers from London. All factions, in short, were willing, in this momentous crisis, to lay aside old dissensions; it depended upon the conciliation of the Northumbrians, upon a fusion between the friends of Harold and the supporters of the young sons of Algar, to form such a concurrence of interests as must inevitably bear Harold to the throne of the empire.

Meanwhile, the Earl himself wisely and patriotically deemed it right to remain neuter in the approaching decision between Tostig and the young earls. He could not be so unjust and so mad as to urge to the utmost (and risk in the urging) his party influence on the side of oppression and injustice, solely for the sake of his brother; nor, on the other, was it decorous or natural to take part himself against Tostig; nor could he, as a statesman, contemplate without anxiety and alarm the transfer of so large a portion of the realm to the vice-kingship of the sons of his old foe—rivals to his power, at the very time when, even for the sake of England alone, that power should be the most solid and compact.

But the final greatness of a fortunate man is rarely made by any violent effort of his own. He has sown the seeds in the time foregone, and the ripe time brings up the harvest. His fate seems taken out of his own control; greatness seems thrust upon him. He has made himself, as it were, a *want* to the nation, a thing necessary to it; he has identified himself with his age, and in the wreath or the crown on his brow, the age itself seems to put forth its flower.

Tostig, lodging apart from Harold in a fort near the gate of Oxford, took slight pains to conciliate foes or make friends; trusting rather to his representations to Edward (who was wroth with the rebellious House of Algar), of the danger of compromising the royal dignity by concessions to armed insurgents.

It was but three days before that for which the Witan was summoned; most of its members had already assembled in the city; and Harold, from the window of the monastery in which he lodged, was gazing thoughtfully into the streets below, where, with the gay dresses of the thegns and cnehts, blended the grave robes of ecclesiastic and youthful scholar;—for to that illustrious university (pillaged and persecuted by the sons of Canute), Edward had, to his honor, restored the schools,—when Haco entered and announced to him that a numerous body of thegns and prelates, headed by Alred Archbishop of York, craved an audience.

"Knowest thou the cause, Haco?"

The youth's cheek was yet more pale than usual, as he answered slowly,—

"Hilda's prophecies are ripening into truths."

The Earl started, and his old ambition reviving, flushed on his brow, and sparkled from his eye—he checked the joyous emotion, and bade Haco briefly admit the visitors.

They came in, two by two,—a body so numerous that they filled the ample chamber; and Harold, as he greeted each, beheld the most powerful lords of the land—the highest dignitaries of the Church—and, oft and frequent, came old foe by the side of trusty friend. They all paused at the foot of the narrow dais on which Harold stood, and Alred repelled by a gesture his invitation to the foremost to mount the platform.

Then Alred began an harangue, simple and earnest. He described briefly the condition of the country; touched with grief and

with feeling on the health of the king, and the failure of Cerdic's line. He stated honestly his own strong wish, if possible, to have concentrated the popular suffrages on the young Atheling; and under the emergence of the case, to have waived the objection to his immature years. But as distinctly and emphatically he stated, that that hope and intent he had now formally abandoned, and that there was but one sentiment on the subject with all the chiefs and dignitaries of the realm.

"Wherefore," continued he, "after anxious consultations with each other, those whom you see around have come to you: yea, to you, Earl Harold, we offer our hands and hearts to do our best to prepare for you the throne on the demise of Edward, and to seat you thereon as firmly as ever sate King of England and son of Cerdic;—knowing that in you, and in you alone, we find the man who reigns already in the English heart; to whose strong arm we can trust the defence of our land; to whose just thoughts, our laws.—As I speak, so think we all!"

With downcast eyes Harold heard; and but by a slight heaving of his breast under his crimson robe, could his emotion be seen. But as soon as the approving murmur, that succeeded the prelate's speech, had closed, he lifted his head, and answered,—

"Holy father, and you, Right Worthy my fellow-thegns, if ye could read my heart at this moment, believe that you would not find there the vain joy of aspiring man, when the greatest of earthly prizes is placed within his reach. There, you would see, with deep and wordless gratitude for your trust and your love, grave and solemn solicitude, earnest desire to divest my decision of all mean thought of self, and judge only whether indeed, as king or as subject, I can best guard the weal of England. Pardon me, then, if I answer you not as ambition alone would answer; neither deem me insensible to the glorious lot of presiding, under heaven, and by the light of our laws, over the destinies of the English realm,—if I pause to weigh well the responsibilities incurred, and the obstacles to be surmounted.

"There is that on my mind that I would fain unbosom, not of a nature to discuss in an assembly so numerous, but which I would rather submit to a chosen few whom you yourselves may select to hear me, in whose cool wisdom, apart from personal love to me, ye may best confide;—your most veteran thegns, your most honored prelates: To them will I speak, to them make clean my bosom; and to their answer, their counsels, will I in all things defer: whether with loyal heart to serve another, whom, hearing me, they may decide to choose; or to fit my soul to bear, not unworthily, the weight of a kingly crown."

Alred lifted his mild eyes to Harold, and there were both pity and approval in his gaze, for he divined the Earl.

"Thou hast chosen the right course, my son; and we will retire at once, and elect those with whom thou mayst freely confer, and by whose judgment thou mayst righteously abide."

The prelate turned, and with him went the conclave.

Left alone with Haco, the last said, abruptly,—

"Thou wilt not be so indiscreet, O Harold, as to confess thy compelled oath to the fraudful Norman?"

"That is my design," replied Harold, coldly.

The son of Sweyn began to remonstrate, but the Earl cut him short.

"If the Norman say that he has been deceived in Harold, never so shall say the men of England. Leave me. I know not why, Haco, but in thy presence, at times, there is a glamor as strong as in the spells of Hilda. Go, dear boy; the fault is not in thee but in the superstitious infirmities of a man who hath once lowered, or, it may be, too highly strained, his reason to the things of a haggard fancy. Go! and send to me my brother Gurth. I would have him alone of my House present at this solemn crisis of its fate."

Haco bowed his head, and went.

In a few moments more, Gurth came in. To this pure and spotless spirit Harold had already related the events of his unhappy visit to the Norman; and he felt, as the young chief pressed his hand, and looked on him with his clear and loving eyes, as if Honor made palpable stood by his side.

Six of the ecclesiastics, most eminent for

Church learning,—small as was that which they could boast, compared with the scholars of Normandy and the Papal States, but at least more intelligent and more free from mere formal monasticism than most of their Saxon contemporaries,—and six of the chiefs most renowned for experience in war or council, selected under the sagacious promptings of Alred, accompanied that prelate to the presence of the Earl.

"Close, thou! close! close! Gurth," whispered Harold: "for this is a confession against man's pride, and sorely doth it shame; —so that I would have thy bold sinless heart beating near to mine."

Then, leaning his arm upon his brother's shoulder, and in a voice, the first tones of which, as betraying earnest emotion, irresistibly chained and affected his noble audience, Harold began his tale.

Various were the emotions, though all more akin to terror than repugnance, with which the listeners heard the Earl's plain and candid recital.

Among the lay-chiefs the impression made by the compelled oath was comparatively slight: for it was the worst vice of the Saxon laws, to entangle all charges, from the smallest to the greatest, in a reckless multiplicity of oaths,* to the grievous loosening of the bonds of truth: and oaths then had become almost as much mere matter of legal form, as certain oaths—bad relic of those times! —still existing in our parliamentary and collegiate proceedings, are deemed by men, not otherwise dishonorable, even now. And to no kind of oath was more latitude given than to such as related to fealty to a chief: for these, in the constant rebellions which happened year after year, were openly violated, and without reproach. Not a sub-king in Wales who harried the border, not an Earl who raised banner against the Basileus of Britain, but infringed his oath to be good man and true to the lord paramount; and even William the Norman himself never found his oath of fealty stand in his way, whenever he deemed it right and expedient to take arms against his suzerain of France.

* See the judicious remarks of Henry, "Hist. of Britain," on this head. From the lavish abuse of oaths, perjury had come to be reckoned one of the national vices of the Saxon.

On the churchmen the impression was stronger and more serious: not that made by the oath itself, but by the relics on which the hand had been laid. They looked at each other, doubtful and appalled, when the Earl ceased his tale; while only among the laymen circled a murmur of mingled wrath at William's bold design on their native land, and of scorn at the thought that an oath, surprised and compelled, should be made the instrument of treason to a whole people.

"Thus," said Harold, after a pause, "thus have I made clear to you my conscience, and revealed to you the only obstacle between your offers and my choice. From the keeping of an oath so extorted, and so deadly to England, this venerable prelate and mine own soul have freed me. Whether as king or as subject, I shall alike revere the living and their long posterity more than the dead men's bones, and, with sword and with battle-axe, hew out against the invader my best atonement for the lip's weakness and the heart's desertion. But whether, knowing what hath passed, ye may not deem it safer for the land to elect another king,—this it is which, free and fore-thoughtful of every chance, ye should now decide."

With these words he stepped from the dais, and retired into the oratory that adjoined the chamber, followed by Gurth. The eyes of the priests then turned to Alred, and to them the prelate spoke as he had done before to Harold;—he distinguished between the oath and its fulfilment—between the lesser sin and the greater—the one which the Church could absolve—the one which no Church had the right to exact, and which, if fulfilled, no penance could expiate. He owned frankly, nevertheless, that it was the difficulties so created, that had made him incline to the Atheling; but, convinced of that prince's incapacity, even in the most ordinary times, to rule England, he shrunk yet more from such a choice, when the swords of the Norman were already sharpening for contest. Finally he said, "If a man as fit to defend us as Harold can be found, let us prefer him: if not——"

"There is no other man!" cried the thegns with one voice. "And," said a wise old chief, "had Harold sought to play a trick to secure the throne, he could not have

devised one more sure than the tale he hath now told us. What! just when we are most assured that the doughtiest and deadliest foe that our land can brave, waits but for Edward's death to enforce on us a stranger's yoke—what! shall we for that very reason deprive ourselves of the only man able to resist him? Harold hath taken an oath! God wot, who among us have not taken some oath at law for which they have deemed it meet afterwards to do a penance, or endow a convent? The wisest means to strengthen Harold against that oath, is to show the moral impossibility of fulfilling it, by placing him on the throne. The best proof we can give to this insolent Norman that England is not for prince to leave, or subject to barter, is to choose solemnly in our Witan the very chief whom his frauds prove to us that he fears the most. Why, William would laugh in his own sleeve to summon a king to descend from his throne to do him the homage which that king, in the different capacity of subject, had (we will grant, even willingly,) promised to render."

This speech spoke all the thoughts of the laymen, and, with Alred's previous remarks, reassured all the ecclesiastics. They were easily induced to believe that the usual Church penances, and ample Church gifts, would suffice for the insult offered to the relics: and,—if they in so grave a case outstripped, in absolution, an authority amply sufficing for all ordinary matters,—Harold, as king, might easily gain from the Pope himself that full pardon and shrift, which as mere earl, against the prince of the Normans, he would fail of obtaining.

These or similar reflections soon terminated the suspense of the select council; and Alred sought the Earl in the oratory, to summon him back to the conclave. The two brothers were kneeling side by side before the little altar; and there was something inexpressibly touching in their humble attitudes, their clasped supplicating hands, in that moment when the crown of England rested above their House.

The brothers rose, and at Alred's sign followed the prelate into the council-room. Alred briefly communicated the result of the conference; and with an aspect, and in a tone, free alike from triumph and indecision, Harold replied:—

"As ye will, so will I. Place me only where I can most serve the common cause. Remain you now, knowing my secret, a chosen and standing council: too great is my personal stake in this matter to allow my mind to be unbiassed; judge ye, then, and decide for me in all things: your minds should be calmer and wiser than mine; in all things I will abide by your counsel; and thus I accept the trust of a nation's freedom."

Each thegn then put his hand into Harold's, and called himself Harold's man.

"Now, more than ever," said the wise old thegn who had before spoken, "will it be needful to heal all dissension in the kingdom—to reconcile with us Mercia and Northumbria, and make the kingdom one against the foe. You, as Tostig's brother, have done well to abstain from active interference; you do well to leave it to us to negotiate the necessary alliance between all brave and good men."

"And to that end, as imperative for the public weal, you consent," said Alred, thoughtfully, "to abide by our advice, whatever it be?"

"Whatever it be, so that it serve England," answered the Earl.

A smile, somewhat sad, flitted over the prelate's pale lips, and Harold was once more alone with Gurth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE soul of all council and cabal on behalf of Harold, which had led to the determination of the principal chiefs, and which now succeeded it—was Haco.

His rank as son of Sweyn, the first-born of Godwin's house—a rank which might have authorized some pretension on his own part, gave him all field for the exercise of an intellect singularly keen and profound. Accustomed to an atmosphere of practical state-craft in the Norman court, with faculties sharpened from boyhood by vigilance and meditation, he exercised an extraordinary influence over the simple understandings of the homely clergy and the uncultured thegns. Impressed with the conviction of his early doom, he felt no interest in the

objects of others; but equally believing that whatever of bright, and brave, and glorious, in his brief, condemned career, was to be reflected on him from the light of Harold's destiny, the sole desire of a nature, which, under other auspices, would have been intensely daring and ambitious, was to administer to Harold's greatness. No prejudice, no principle, stood in the way of this dreary enthusiasm. As a father, himself on the brink of the grave, schemes for the worldly grandeur of the son, in whom he confounds and melts his own life, so this sombre and predestined man, dead to earth and to joy and the emotions of the heart, looked beyond his own tomb, to that existence in which he transferred and carried on his ambition.

If the leading agencies of Harold's memorable career might be, as it were, symbolized and allegorized, by the living beings with which it was connected—as Edith was the representative of stainless Truth—as Gurth was the type of dauntless Duty—as Hilda embodied aspiring Imagination—so Haco seemed the personation of Worldly Wisdom. And cold in that worldly wisdom Haco labored on, now confering with Alred and the partisans of Harold; now closeted with Edwin and Morcar; now gliding from the chamber of the sick king.—That wisdom foresaw all obstacles, smoothed all difficulties; ever calm, never resting; marshalling and harmonizing the things to be, like the ruthless hand of a tranquil fate. But there was one with whom Haco was more often than with all others—one whom the presence of Harold had allured to that anxious scene of intrigue, and whose heart leapt high at the hopes whispered from the smileless lips of Haco.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was the second day after that which assured him the allegiance of the thegns, that a message was brought to Harold from the Lady Aldyth. She was in Oxford, at a convent, with her young daughter by the Welch king; she prayed him to visit her. The Earl, whose active mind, abstaining from the intrigues around him, was delivered up to the thoughts, restless and feverish, which haunt the repose of all active minds, was not unwilling to escape awhile from himself. He went to Aldyth. The royal widow had laid by the signs of mourning; she was dressed with the usual stately and loose-robed splendor of Saxon matrons, and all the proud beauty of her youth was restored to her cheek. At her feet was that daughter who afterwards married the Fleance so familiar to us in Shakspeare, and became the ancestral mother of those Scottish kings who had passed, in pale shadows, across the eyes of Macbeth; * by the side of the child, Harold to his surprise saw the ever ominous face of Haco.

But proud as was Aldyth, all pride seemed humbled into woman's sweeter emotions at the sight of the Earl, and she was at first unable to command words to answer his greeting.

Gradually, however, she warmed into cordial confidence. She touched lightly on her past sorrows; she permitted it to be seen that her lot with the fierce Gryffyth had been one not more of public calamity than of domestic grief, and that in the natural awe and horror which the murder of her lord had caused, she felt rather for the ill-starred king than the beloved spouse. She then passed to the differences still existing between her house and Harold's, and spoke well and wisely of the desire of the young earls to conciliate his grace and favor.

While thus speaking, Morcar and Edwin, as if accidentally, entered, and their salutations of Harold were such as became their relative positions; reserved, not distant—respectful, not servile. With the delicacy of high natures, they avoided touching on the cause before the Witan (fixed for the morrow), on which depended their earldoms or their exile.

Harold was pleased by their bearing, and attracted towards them by the memory of the affectionate words that had passed between him and Leofric, their illustrious grandsire, over his father's corpse. He thought then of his own prayer; "Let there be peace between thine and mine!" and looking at their fair and stately youth, and

* And so, from Gryffyth, beheaded by his subjects, descended Charles Stuart.

noble carriage, he could not but feel that the men of Northumbria and of Mercia had chosen well. The discourse, however, was naturally brief, since thus made general; the visit soon ceased, and the brothers attended Harold to the door with the courtesy of the times. Then Haco said, with that faint movement of the lips which was his only approach to a smile,

"Will ye not, noble thegns, give your hands to my kinsman?"

"Surely," said Edwin, the handsomer and more gentle of the two, and who, having a poet's nature, felt a poet's enthusiasm for the gallant deeds even of a rival,—"surely, if the Earl will accept the hands of those who trust never to be compelled to draw sword against England's hero."

Harold stretched forth his hand in reply, and that cordial and immemorial pledge of our national friendships was interchanged.

Gaining the street, Harold said to his nephew,

"Standing as I do towards the young Earls, that appeal of thine had been better omitted."

"Nay," answered Haco; "their cause is already prejudged in their favor. And thou must ally thyself with the heirs of Leofric, and the successors of Siward."

Harold made no answer. There was something in the positive tone of this beardless youth that displeased him; but he remembered that Haco was the son of Sweyn, Godwin's first-born, and that, but for Sweyn's crimes, Haco might have held the place in England he held himself, and looked to the same august destinies beyond.

In the evening a messenger from the Roman house arrived, with two letters for Harold; one from Hilda, that contained but these words: "Again peril menaces thee, but in the shape of good. Beware! and, above all, of the evil that wears the form of wisdom."

The other letter was from Edith; it was long for the letters of that age, and every sentence spoke a heart wrapped in his.

Reading the last, Hilda's warnings were forgotten. The picture of Edith—the prospect of a power that might at last effect their union, and reward her long devotion—rose before him, to the exclusion of wilder fancies and loftier hopes; and his sleep that night was full of youthful and happy dreams.

The next day the Witan met. The meeting was less stormy than had been expected; for the minds of most men were made up, and so far as Tostig was interested, the facts were too evident and notorious, the witnesses too numerous, to leave any option to the judges. Edward, on whom alone Tostig had relied, had already, with his ordinary vacillation, been swayed towards a right decision, partly by the counsels of Alred and his other prelates, and especially by the representations of Haco, whose grave bearing and profound dissimulation had gained a singular influence over the formal and melancholy King.

By some previous compact or understanding between the opposing parties, there was no attempt, however, to push matters against the offending Tostig to vindictive extremes. There was no suggestion of outlawry, or punishment, beyond the simple deprivation of the earldom he had abused. And in return for this moderation on the one side, the other agreed to support and ratify the new election of the Northumbrians. Morcar was thus formally invested with the vice-kingship of that great realm; while Edwin was confirmed in the earldom of the principal part of Mercia.

On the announcement of these decrees, which were received with loud applause by all the crowd assembled to hear them, Tostig, rallying round him his house-carles, left the town. He went first to Githa, with whom his wife had sought refuge; and, after a long conference with his mother, he, and his haughty Countess, journeyed to the sea-coast, and took ship for Flanders.

CHAPTER IX.

GURTH and Harold were seated in close commune in the Earl's chamber, at an hour long after the complin (or second vespers), when Alred entered unexpectedly. The old man's face was unusually grave, and Harold's penetrating eye saw that he was gloomy with some matters of great moment.

"Harold," said the prelate, seating himself, "the hour has come to test thy truth,

when thou saidst that thou wert ready to make all sacrifice to thy land, and further, that thou wouldst abide by the counsel of those free from thy passions, and looking on thee only as the instrument of England's weal."

"Speak on, father," said Harold, turning somewhat pale at the solemnity of the address; "I am ready, if the council so desire, to remain a subject, and aid in the choice of a worthier king."

"Thou divinest me ill," answered Alred; "I do not call on thee to lay aside the crown, but to crucify the heart. The decree of the Witan assigns Mercia and Northumbria to the sons of Algar. The old demarcations of the heptarchy, as thou knowest, are scarce worn out; it is even now less one monarchy, than various states retaining their own laws, and inhabited by different races, who under the sub-kings, called earls, acknowledge a supreme head in the Basileus of Britain. Mercia hath its March law and its prince; Northumbria its Dane law, and its leader. To elect a king without civil war, these realms, for so they are, must unite with and sanction the Witans elsewhere held.

"Only thus can the kingdom be firm against foes without and anarchy within; and the more so, from the alliance between the new earls of those great provinces and the House of Gryffyth, which still lives in Caradoc his son. What if at Edward's death Mercia and Northumbria refuse to sanction thy accession? What, if, when all our force were needed against the Norman, the Welch broke loose from their hills, and the Scots from their moors! Malcolm of Cumbria, now King of Scotland, is Tostig's dearest friend, while his people side with Morcar. Verily these are dangers enow for a new king, even if William's sword slept in its sheath."

"Thou speakest the words of wisdom," said Harold, "but I knew beforehand that he who wears a crown must abjure repose."

"Not so; there is one way, and but one, to reconcile all England to thy dominion—to win to thee not the cold neutrality but the eager zeal of Mercia and Northumbria; to make the first guard thee from the Welch, the last be thy rampart against the Scot. In a word, thou must ally thyself with the blood of these young earls; thou must wed with Aldyth their sister."

The Earl sprang to his feet aghast.

"No—no!" he exclaimed; "not that!—any sacrifice but that!—rather forfeit the throne than resign the heart that leans on mine! Thou knowest my pledge to Edith, my cousin; pledge hallowed by the faith of long years. No—no, have mercy—human mercy; I can wed no other!—any sacrifice but that!"

The good prelate, though not unprepared for this burst, was much moved by its genuine anguish; but, steadfast to his purpose, he resumed:—

"Alas, my son, so say we all in the hour of trial—any sacrifice but that which duty and heaven ordain. Resign the throne thou canst not, or thou leavest the land without a ruler, distracted by rival claims and ambitions, an easy prey to the Norman. Resign thy human affections thou canst and must; and the more, O Harold, that even if duty compelled not this new alliance, the old tie is one of sin, which, as king, and as high example in high place to all men, thy conscience within, and the Church without, summon thee to break. How purify the erring lives of the churchmen, if thyself a rebel to the Church? and if thou hast thought that thy power as king might prevail on the Roman Pontiff to grant dispensation for wedlock within the degrees, and that so thou mightest legally confirm thy now illegal troth; bethink thee well, thou hast a more dread and urgent boon now to ask—in absolution from thine oath to William. Both prayers, surely, our Roman father will not grant. Wilt thou choose that which absolves from sin, or that which consults but thy carnal affections?"

Harold covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud in his strong agony.

"Aid me, Gurth," cried Alred, "thou sinless and spotless; thou, in whose voice a brother's love can blend with a Christian's zeal; aid me, Gurth, to melt the stubborn, but to comfort the human, heart."

Then Gurth, with a strong effort over himself, knelt by Harold's side, and in strong simple language, backed the representations of the priest. In truth, all argument drawn from reason, whether in the state of the land, or the new duties to which Harold was com-

mitted, were on the one side, and unanswerable; on the other, was but that mighty resistance which love opposes ever to reason. And Harold continued to murmur, while his hands concealed his face.

"Impossible! — she who trusted, who trusts—who so loves—she whose whole youth hath been consumed in patient faith in me! —Resign her! and for another! I cannot—I cannot. Take from me the throne!—Oh vain heart of man, that so long desired its own curse!—Crown the Atheling; my manhood shall defend his youth.—But not this offering! No, no—I will not!"

It were tedious to relate the rest of that prolonged and agitated conference. All that night, till the last stars waned, and the bells of prime were heard from church and convent, did the priest and the brother alternately plead and remonstrate, chide and soothe; and still Harold's heart clung to Edith's, with its bleeding roots. At length they, perhaps not unwisely, left him to himself; and as, whispering low their hopes and their fears of the result of the self-conflict, they went forth from the convent, Haco joined them in the courtyard, and while his cold mournful eye scanned the faces of priest and brother, he asked them "how they had sped?"

Alred shook his head and answered,—

"Man's heart is more strong in the flesh than true to the spirit."

"Pardon me, father," said Haco, "if I suggest that your most eloquent and persuasive ally in this, were Edith herself. Start not so incredulously; it is because she loves the Earl more than her own life, that—once show her that the Earl's safety, greatness, honor, duty, lie in the release from his troth to her—that nought save his erring love resists your counsels and his country's claims —and Edith's voice will have more power than yours."

The virtuous prelate, more acquainted with man's selfishness than woman's devotion, only replied by an impatient gesture. But Gurth, lately wedded to a woman worthy of him, said gravely,—

"Haco speaks well, my father; and methinks it is due to both that Edith should not, unconsulted, be abandoned by him for whom she has abjured all others; to whom she has been as devoted in heart as if sworn wife already. Leave we awhile my brother, never the slave of passion, and with whom England must at last prevail over all selfish thought; and ride we at once to tell to Edith what we have told to him; or rather—woman can best in such a case speak to woman—let us tell all to our Lady—Edward's wife, Harold's sister, and Edith's holy godmother—and abide by her counsel. On the third day we shall return."

"Go we so charged, noble Gurth," said Haco, observing the prelate's reluctant countenance, "and leave we our reverend father to watch over the Earl's sharp struggle."

"Thou speakest well, my son," said the prelate, "and thy mission suits the young and the layman, better than the old and the priest."

"Let us go, Haco," said Gurth, briefly. "Deep, sore, and lasting, is the wound I inflict on the brother of my love; and my own heart bleeds in his; but he himself hath taught me to hold England as a Roman held Rome."

CHAPTER X.

It is the nature of that happiness which we derive from our affections to be calm; its immense influence upon our outward life is not known till it is troubled or withdrawn. By placing his heart at peace, man leaves vent to his energies and passions, and permits their current to flow towards the aims and objects which interest labor or arouse ambition. Thus absorbed in the occupation without, he is lulled into a certain forgetfulness of the value of that internal repose which gives health and vigor to the faculties he employs abroad. But once mar this scarce felt, almost invisible harmony, and the discord extends to the remotest chords of our active being. Say to the busiest man whom thou seest in mart, camp, or senate, who seems to thee all intent upon his worldly schemes, "Thy home is reft from thee —thy household gods are shattered—that sweet noiseless content in the regular mechanism of the springs, which set the large wheels of thy soul into movement is thine nevermore!"—and straightway all exertion

seems robbed of its object—all aim of its alluring charm. "Othello's occupation is gone!" With a start, that man will awaken from the sunlit visions of noontide ambition, and exclaim in his desolate anguish, "What are all the rewards to my labor, now thou hast robbed me of repose? How little are all the gains wrung from strife, in a world of rivals and foes, compared to the smile whose sweetness I knew not till it was lost; and the sense of security from mortal ill which I took from the trust and sympathy of love!"

Thus was it with Harold in that bitter and terrible crisis of his fate. This rare and spiritual love, which had existed on hope, which had never known fruition, had become the subtlest, the most exquisite part of his being; this love, to the full and holy possession of which, every step in his career seemed to advance him, was it now to be evermore reft from his heart, his existence, at the very moment when he had deemed himself most secure of its rewards—when he most needed its consolations? Hitherto, in that love he had lived in the future—he had silenced the voice of the turbulent human passion by the whisper of the patient angel, "A little while yet, and thy bride sits beside thy throne!" Now what was that future! how joyless, how desolate! The splendor vanished from Ambition—the glow from the face of Fame—the sense of Duty remained alone to counteract the pleadings of Affection; but Duty, no longer dressed in all the gorgeous colorings it took before from glory and power—Duty stern, and harsh, and terrible, as the iron frown of a Grecian Destiny.

And thus, front to front with that Duty, he sate alone one evening, while his lips murmured, "Oh fatal vovage, Oh lying truth in the hell-born prophecy! this, then, this was the wife my league with the Norman was to win to my arms!" In the streets below were heard the tramp of busy feet hurrying homeward, and the confused uproar of joyous wassail from the various resorts of entertainment crowded by careless revellers. And the tread of steps mounted the stairs without his door, and there paused; —and there was the murmur of two voices without; one the clear voice of Gurth,—one softer and more troubled. The Earl lifted his head from his bosom, and his heart beat quick at the faint and scarce heard sound of that last voice. The door opened gently, gently: a form entered, and halted on the shadow of the threshold; the door closed again by a hand from without. The Earl rose to his feet, tremulously, and the next moment Edith was at his knees; her hood thrown back, her face upturned to his, bright with unfaded beauty, serene with the grandeur of self-martyrdom.

"O Harold!" she exclaimed, "dost thou remember that in the old time I said, 'Edith had loved thee less, if thou hadst not loved England more than Edith?' Recall, recall those words. And deemest thou now that I, who have gazed for years into thy clear soul, and learned there to sun my woman's heart in the light of all glories native to noblest man,—deemest thou, O Harold, that I am weaker now than then, when I scarce knew what England and glory were?"

"Edith, Edith, what woudlst thou say?—What knowest thou?—Who hath told thee?—What led thee hither, to take part against thyself?"

"It matters not who told me; I know all. What led me? Mine own soul, and mine own love!" Springing to her feet, and clasping his hand in both hers, while she looked into his face, she resumed: "I do not say to thee, 'Grieve not to part;' for I know too well thy faith, thy tenderness—thy heart, so grand and so soft. But I do say, 'Soar above thy grief, and be more than man for the sake of men!' Yes, Harold, for this last time I behold thee. I clasp thy hand, I lean on thy heart, I hear its beating, and I shall go hence without a tear."

"It cannot, it shall not be!" exclaimed Harold, passionately. "Thou deceivest thyself in the divine passion of the hour: thou canst not foresee the utterness of the desolation to which thou wouldst doom thy life. We were betrothed to each other by ties as strong as those of the Church,—over the grave of the dead, under the vault of heaven, in the form of ancestral faith! The bond cannot be broken. If England demands me, let England take me with the ties it were unholy, even for her sake, to rend!"

"Alas, alas!" faltered Edith, while the flush on her cheek sank into mournful pale-

ness. "It is not as thou sayest. So has thy love sheltered me from the world—so utter was my youth's ignorance, or my heart's oblivion of the stern laws of man, that when it pleased thee that we should love each other, I could not believe that that love was sin; and that it was sin hitherto I will not think; —*now* it hath become one."

"No, no!" cried Harold; all the eloquence on which thousands had hung, thrilled and spell-bound, deserting him in that hour of need, and leaving to him only broken exclamations,—fragments, in each of which his heart itself seemed shivered; "no, no,—not sin!—sin only to forsake thee. —Hush! hush!—This is a dream—wait till we wake! True heart! noble soul!—I will not part from thee!"

"But I from thee! And rather than thou shouldst be lost for my sake—the sake of woman—to honor and conscience, and all for which thy sublime life sprang from the hands of Nature—if not the cloister, may I find the grave!—Harold, to the last let me be worthy of thee; and feel, at least, that if not thy wife—that bright, that blessed fate not mine!—still, remembering Edith, just men may say, 'She would not have dishonored the hearth of Harold!'"

"Dost thou know," said the Earl, striving to speak calmly, "dost thou know that it is not only to resign thee that they demand—that it is to resign thee, and for another?"

"I know it," said Edith; and two burning tears, despite her strong and preternatural self-exaltation, swelled from the dark fringe, and rolled slowly down the colorless cheek, as she added, with proud voice, "I know it: but that other is not Aldyth, it is England! In her, in Aldyth, behold the dear cause of thy native land; with her enweave the love which thy native land should command. So thinking, thou art reconciled, and I consoled. It is not for woman that thou desertest Edith."

"Hear, and take from those lips the strength and the valor that belong to the name of Hero!" said a deep and clear voice behind; and Gurth,—who, whether distrusting the result of an interview so prolonged, or tenderly desirous to terminate its pain, had entered unobserved,—approached, and wound his arm caressingly round his brother. "Oh, Harold!" he said, "dear to me as the drops in my heart is my young bride, newly wed; but if for one tithe of the claims that now call thee to the torture and trial—yea, if but for one hour of good service to freedom and law—I would consent without a groan to behold her no more. And if men asked me how I could so conquer man's affections, I would point to thee, and say, 'So Harold taught my youth by his lessons, and my manhood by his life.' Before thee, visible, stand Happiness and Love, but with them, Shame; before thee, invisible, stands Woe, but with Woe are England and eternal Glory! Choose between them."

"He hath chosen," said Edith, as Harold turned to the wall, and leaned against it, hiding his face; then, approaching softly, she knelt, lifted to her lips the hem of his robe, and kissed it with devout passion.

Harold turned suddenly, and opened his arms. Edith resisted not that mute appeal; she rose, and fell on his breast, sobbing.

Wild and speechless was that last embrace. The moon, which had witnessed their union by the heathen grave, now rose above the tower of the Christian church, and looked wan and cold upon their parting.

Solemn and clear paused the orb—a cloud passed over the disk—and Edith was gone. The cloud rolled away, and again the moon shone forth; and where had knelt the fair form, and looked the last look of Edith, stood the motionless image, and gazed the solemn eye, of the dark son of Sweyn. But Harold leant on the breast of Gurth, and saw not who had supplanted the soft and loving Fylgia of his life—saw nought in the universe but the blank of desolation!

BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

THE NORMAN SCHEMER, AND THE NORWEGIAN SEA-KING.

CHAPTER I.

It was the eve of the 5th of January—the eve of the day announced to King Edward as that of his deliverance from earth; and whether or not the prediction had wrought its own fulfilment on the fragile frame and susceptible nerves of the King, the last of the line of Cerdic was fast passing into the solemn shades of eternity.

Without the walls of the palace, through the whole city of London, the excitement was indescribable. All the river before the palace was crowded with boats; all the broad space on the Isle of Thorney itself, thronged with anxious groups. But a few days before, the new-built Abbey had been solemnly consecrated; with the completion of that holy edifice, Edward's life itself seemed done. Like the kings of Egypt, he had built his tomb.

Within the palace, if possible, still greater was the agitation, more dread the suspense. Lobbies, halls, corridors, stairs, ante-rooms, were filled with churchmen and thegns. Nor was it alone for news of the King's state that their brows were so knit, that their breath came and went so short. It is not when a great chief is dying, that men compose their minds to deplore a loss. That comes long after, when the worm is at its work, and comparison between the dead and the living often rights the one to wrong the other. But while the breath is struggling, and the eye glazing, life, busy in the bystanders, murmurs, "Who shall be the heir?" And, in this instance, never had suspense been so keenly wrought up into hope and terror. For the news of Duke William's designs had now spread far and near; and awful was the doubt, whether the abhorred Norman should receive his sole sanction to so arrogant a claim from the parting assent of Edward. Although, as we have seen, the crown was not absolutely within the bequest of a dying king, but at the will of the Witan, still, in circumstances so unparalleled, the utter failure of all natural heirs, save a boy feeble in mind as body, and half foreign by birth and rearing; the love borne by Edward to the Church; and the sentiments, half of pity half of reverence, with which he was regarded throughout the land;—his dying word would go far to influence the council and select the successor. Some whispering to each other, with pale lips, all the dire predictions then current in men's mouths and breasts; some in moody silence; all lifted eager eyes, as, from time to time, a gloomy Benedictine passed in the direction to or fro the King's chamber.

In that chamber, traversing the past of eight centuries, enter we with hushed and noiseless feet—a room known to us in many a later scene and legend of England's troubled history, as "The Painted Chamber," long called "The Confessor's." At the farthest end of that long and lofty space, raised upon a regal platform, and roofed with regal canopy, was the bed of death.

At the foot stood Harold; on one side knelt Edith, the King's lady; at the other Alred; while Stigand stood near—the holy rood in his hand—and the abbot of the new monastery of Westminster by Stigand's side; and all the greatest thegns, including Morcar and Edwin, Gurth and Leofwine, all the more illustrious prelates and abbots, stood also on the dais.

In the lower end of the hall, the King's physician was warming a cordial over the brazier, and some of the subordinate officers of the household were standing in the niches of the deep set windows; and they—not great eno' for other emotions than those of human love for their kindly lord—*they* wept.

The King, who had already undergone the last holy offices of the Church, was lying quite quiet, his eyes half closed, breathing low but regularly. He had been speechless the two preceding days; on this he had uttered a few words, which showed returning consciousness. His hand, reclined on the coverlid, was clasped in his wife's, who was praying fervently. Something in the touch of her hand, or the sound of her murmur, stirred the King from the growing lethargy, and his eyes opening, fixed on the kneeling lady.

"Ah?" said he faintly, "ever good, ever meek! Think not I did not love thee; hearts will be read yonder; we shall have our guerdon."

The lady looked up through her streaming tears. Edward released his hand, and laid it on her head as in benediction. Then motioning to the abbot of Westminster, he drew from his finger the ring which the palmers had brought to him,* and murmured scarce audibly—

"Be this kept in the House of St. Peter in memory of me!"

"He is alive now to us—speak—" whispered more than one thegn, one abbot, to Alred and to Stigand. And Stigand, as the harder and more worldly man of the two, moved up, and bending over the pillar, between Alred and the King, said—

"O royal son, about to win the crown to which that of earth is but an idiot's wreath of withered leaves, not yet may thy soul forsake us. Whom commendest thou to us as shepherd to thy bereaven flock? whom shall we admonish to tread in those traces thy footsteps leave below?"

The King made a slight gesture of impatience; and the Queen, forgetful of all but her womanly sorrow, raised her eye and finger in reproof that the dying was thus disturbed. But the stake was too weighty, the suspense too keen, for that reverent delicacy in those around; and the thegns pressed on each other, and a murmur rose, which murmured the name of Harold.

"Bethink thee, my son," said Alred, in a tender voice, tremulous with emotion; "the young Atheling is too much an infant yet for these anxious times."

Edward signed his head in assent.

"Then," said the Norman bishop of London, who till that moment had stood in the rear, almost forgotten amongst the crowd of Saxon prelates, but who himself had been all eyes and ears. "Then," said Bishop William, advancing, "if thine own royal line so fail, who so near to thy love, who so worthy to succeed, as William thy cousin, the Count of the Normans?"

Dark was the scowl on the brow of every thegn, and a muttered "No, no: never the Norman!" was heard distinctly. Harold's face flushed, and his hand was on the hilt of his ateghar. But no other sign gave he of his interest in the question.

The King lay for some moments silent, but evidently striving to re-collect his thoughts. Meanwhile the two arch-prelates bent over him—Stigand eagerly, Alred fondly.

Then raising himself on one arm, while with the other he pointed to Harold at the foot of the bed, the King said—

"Your hearts, I see, are with Harold the Earl: so be it."

At those words he fell back on his pillow; a loud shriek burst from his wife's lips; all crowded around; he lay as the dead.

At the cry, and the indescribable movement of the throng, the physician came quick from the lower part of the hall. He made his way abruptly to the bedside, and said chidingly, "Air, give him air." The throng parted, the leach moistened the King's pale lips with the cordial, but no breath seemed to come forth, no pulse seemed to beat; and while the two prelates knelt before the human body and by the blessed rood, the rest descended the dais, and hastened to depart. Harold only remained; but he had passed from the foot to the head of the bed.

The crowd had gained the centre of the hall, when a sound that startled them as if it had come from the grave, chained every footstep—the sound of the King's voice,

* Brompt. Chron.

loud, terribly distinct, and full, as with the vigor of youth restored. All turned their eyes, appalled; all stood spellbound.

There sate the King upright on the bed, his face seen above the kneeling prelates, and his eyes bright and shining down the Hall.

"Yea," he said deliberately, "yea, as this shall be a real vision or a false illusion, grant me, Almighty One, the power of speech to tell it."

He paused a moment, and thus resumed:—

"It was on the banks of the frozen Seine, this day thirty-and-one winters ago, that two holy monks, to whom the gift of prophecy was vouchsafed, told me of direful woes that should fall on England; 'For God,' said they, 'after thy death, has delivered England into the hand of the enemy, and fiends shall wander over the land.' Then I asked in my sorrow, 'Can nought avert the doom? and may not my people free themselves by repentance, like the Ninevites of old?' And the Prophets answered, 'Nay, nor shall the calamity cease, and the curse be completed, till a green tree be sundered in twain, and the part cut off be carried away; yet move, of itself, to the ancient trunk, unite to the stem, bud out with the blossom, and stretch forth its fruit.' So said the monks, and even now, ere I spoke, I saw them again, there, standing mute, and with the paleness of dead men, by the side of my bed!"

These words were said so calmly, and as it were so rationally, that their import became doubly awful from the cold precision of the tone. A shudder passed through the assembly, and each man shrunk from the King's eye, which seemed to each man to dwell on himself. Suddenly that eye altered in its cold beam; suddenly the voice changed its deliberate accent; the gray hairs seemed to bristle erect, the whole face to work with horror; the arms stretched forth, the form writhed on the couch, distorted fragments from the older Testament rushed from the lips: "*Sanguelac! Sanguelac!*—the Lake of Blood," shrieked forth the dying King, "the Lord hath bent his bow—the Lord hath bared his sword. He comes down as a warrior to war, and his wrath is in the steel and the flame. He boweth the mountains, and comes down, and darkness is under his feet!"

As if revived but for these tremendous denunciations, while the last word left his lips the frame collapsed, the eyes set, and the King fell a corpse in the arms of Harold.

But one smile of the sceptic or the world-man was seen on the paling lips of those present: that smile was not on the lips of warriors and men of mail. It distorted the sharpened features of Stigand, the world-man and the miser, as, passing down, and amidst the group, he said, "Tremble ye at the dreams of a sick old man?" *

CHAPTER II.

THE time of year customary for the National Assembly; the recent consecration of Westminster, for which Edward had convened all his chief spiritual lords, the anxiety felt for the infirm state of the King, and the interest as to the impending succession—all concurred to permit the instantaneous meeting of a Witan worthy, from rank and numbers, to meet the emergency of the time, and proceed to the most momentous election ever yet known in England. The thegns and prelates met in haste. Harold's marriage with Aldyth, which had taken place but a few weeks before, had united all parties with his own; not a claim counter to the great Earl's was advanced; the choice was unanimous. The necessity of terminating at such a crisis all suspense throughout the kingdom, and extinguishing the danger of all counter intrigues, forbade to men thus united any delay in solemnizing their decision; and the august obsequies of Edward were followed on the same day by the coronation of Harold.

It was in the body of the mighty Abbey Church, not indeed as we see it now, after successive restorations, and remodellings, but simple in its long rows of Saxon arch and massive column, blending the first Teuton with the last Roman masonries, that the crowd of the Saxon freemen assembled to honor the monarch of their choice. First Saxon king, since England had been one monarchy, selected not from the single

* See note (*p*) at the end.

House of Cerdic—first Saxon king, not led to the throne by the pale shades of fabled ancestors tracing their descent from the Father-God of the Teuton, but by the spirits that never know a grave—the arch-eternal givers of crowns, and founders of dynasties—Valor and Fame.

Alred and Stigand, the two great prelates of the realm, had conducted Harold to the Church, * and up the aisle to the altar, followed by the chiefs of the Witan in their long robes; and the clergy with their abbots and bishops sung the anthems—"*Fermetur manus tua*," and "*Gloria Patri*."

And now the music ceased; Harold prostrated himself before the altar, and the sacred melody burst forth with the great hymn, "*Te Deum*."

As it ceased, prelate and thegn raised their chief from the floor, and in imitation of the old custom of Teuton and Northman—when the lord of their armaments was borne on shoulder and shield—Harold mounted a platform, and rose in full view of the crowd.

"Thus," said the Archprelate, "we choose Harold son of Godwin for lord and for king." And the thegns drew round, and placed hand on Harold's knee, and cried aloud, "We choose thee, O Harold, for lord and for king." And row by row, line by line, all the multitude shouted forth, "We choose thee, O Harold, for lord and king." So there he stood with his calm brow, facing all, Monarch of England, and Basileus of Britain.

Now unheeded amidst the throng, and leaning against a column in the arches of the aisle, was a woman with her veil round her face; and she lifted the veil for a moment to gaze on that lofty brow, and the tears were streaming fast down her cheek, but her face was not sad.

"Let the vulgar not see, to pity or scorn thee, daughter of kings as great as he who abandons and forsakes thee!" murmured a voice in her ear; and the form of Hilda, needing no support from column or wall, rose erect by the side of Edith. Edith bowed her head and lowered the veil, as the King descended the platform and stood again by the altar, while clear through the hushed assembly rang the words of his triple promise to his people:

"Peace to his Church and the Christian flock.

"Interdict of rapacity and injustice.

"Equity and mercy in his judgments, as God the gracious and just might show mercy to him."

And deep from the hearts of thousands came the low "Amen."

Then after a short prayer, which each prelate repeated, the crowd saw afar the glitter of the crown held over the head of the King. The voice of the consecrator was heard, low till it came to the words "So potently and royally may he rule, against all visible and invisible foes, that the royal throne of the Angles and Saxons may not desert his sceptre."

As the prayer ceased, came the symbolical rite of anointment. Then pealed the sonorous organ,* and solemn along the aisles rose the anthem that closed with the chorus, which the voice of the multitude swelled, "May the King live for ever!" Then the crown that had gleamed in the trembling hand of the prelate, rested firm in its splendor on the front of the King. And the sceptre of rule, and the rod of justice, "to soothe the pious and terrify the bad," were placed in the royal hands. And the prayer and the blessings were renewed,—till the close; "Bless, Lord, the courage of this Prince, and prosper the works of his hand. With his horn, as the horn of the rhinoceros, may he blow the waters to the extremities of the earth; and may He who has ascended to the skies be his aid for ever!"

Then Hilda stretched forth her hand to

* It seems by the coronation service of Ethelred II., still extant, that two bishops officiated in the crowning of the King; and hence, perhaps, the discrepancy in the chroniclers, some contending that Harold was crowned by Alred, others, by Stigand. It is noticeable, however, that it is the apologists of the Normans who assign that office to Stigand, who was in disgrace with the Pope, and deemed no lawful bishop. Thus in the Bayeux Tapestry the label, "Stigand," is significantly affixed to the officiating prelate, as if to convey insinuation, that Harold was not lawfully crowned. Florence, by far the best authority, says distinctly, that Harold was crowned by Alred. The ceremonial of the coronation described in the text, is for the most part given on the authority of the "Cotton MS." quoted by Sharon Turner, vol. iii. p. 151.

* Introduced into our churches in the ninth century.

lead Edith from the place. But Edith shook her head and murmured,—

"But once again, but once!" and with involuntary step moved on.

Suddenly, close where she paused, the crowd parted, and down the narrow lane so formed amidst the wedged and breathless crowd came the august procession;—prelate and thegn swept on from the church to the palace; and alone, with firm and measured step, the diadem on his brow, the sceptre in his hand, came the King. Edith checked the rushing impulse at her heart, but she bent forward, with veil have drawn aside, and so gazed on that face and form of more than royal majesty, fondly, proudly. The King swept on and saw her not; love lived no more for him.

CHAPTER III.

The boat shot over the royal Thames. Borne along the waters, the shouts and the hymns of swarming thousands from the land shook like a blast, the gelid air of the Wolfmonth. All space seemed filled and noisy with the name of Harold the King. Fast rowed the rowers,—on shot the boat; and Hilda's face, stern and ominous, turned to the still towers of the palace, gleaming wide and white in the wintry sun. Suddenly Edith lifted her hand from her bosom, and said passionately,—

"Oh! mother of my mother, I cannot live again in the house where the very walls speak to me of him; all things chain my soul to the earth; and my soul should be in heaven, that its prayers may be heard by the heedful angels. The day that the holy Lady of England predicted hath come to pass, and the silver cord is loosed at last. Ah why, why did I not believe her then? why did I then reject the cloister? Yet no, I will not repent; at least I have been loved! But now I will go to the nunnery of Waltham, and knell at the altars *he* hath hallowed to the mone and the monechyn."

"Edith," said the Vala, "thou wilt not bury thy life yet young in the living grave! And, despite all that now severs you—yea, despite Harold's new and loveless ties—still clearer than ever it is written in the heavens, that a day *shall* come, in which you are to be evermore united. Many of the shapes I have seen, many of the sounds I have heard, in the trance and the dream, fade in the troubled memory of waking life. But never yet hath grown doubtful or dim the prophecy, that the truth pledged by the grave shall be fulfilled."

"Oh, tempt not! Oh, delude not!" cried Edith, while the blood rushed over her brow. "Thou knowest this cannot be. Another's! he is another's! and in the words thou hast uttered there is deadly sin."

"There is no sin in the resolves of a fate that rules us in spite of ourselves. Tarry only till the year bring round the birthday of Harold; for my sayings shall be ripe with the grape, and when the feet of the vineherd are red in the Month of the Vine,* the Nornas shall knit ye together again!"

Edith clasped her hands mutely, and looked hard into the face of Hilda,—looked and shuddered she knew not why.

The boat landed on the eastern shore of the river, beyond the walls of the city, and then Edith bent her way to the holy walls of Waltham. The frost was sharp in the glitter of the unwarming sun; upon leafless boughs hung the barbed ice-gems; and the crown was on the brows of Harold! And at night, within the walls of the convent, Edith heard the hymns of the kneeling monks; and the blasts howled, and the storm arose, and the voices of destroying hurricanes were blent with the swell of the choral hymns.

CHAPTER IV.

Tostig sate in the halls of Bruges, and with him sate Judith, his haughty wife. The Earl and his Countess were playing at chess (or the game resembling it, which amused the idlesse of that age), and the Countess had put her lord's game into mortal disorder, when Tostig swept his hand over the board, and the pieces rolled on the floor.

"That is one way to prevent defeat," said Judith, with a half smile and half frown.

* The Wyn month: October.

"It is the way of the bold and the wise, wife mine," answered Tostig, rising, "let all be destruction where thou thyself canst win not! Peace to these trifles! I cannot keep my mind to the mock fight; it flies to the real. Our last news sours the taste of the wine, and steals the sleep from my couch. It says that Edward cannot live through the winter, and that all men bruit abroad, there can be no king save Harold my brother."

"And will thy brother as King give to thee again thy domain as Earl?"

"He must!" answered Tostig, "and, despite all our breaches, with soft message he will. For Harold has the heart of the Saxon, to which the sons of one father are dear; and Githa, my mother, when we first fled, controlled the voice of my revenge, and bade me wait patient and hope yet."

Scarce had these words fallen from Tostig's lips, when the chief of his Danish house-carles came in, and announced the arrival of a bode from England.

"His news? his news?" cried the Earl, "with his own lips let him speak his news."

The house-carle withdrew but to usher in the messenger, an Anglo-Dane.

"The weight on thy brow shows the load on thy heart," cried Tostig. "Speak, and be brief."

"Edward is dead."

"Ha! and who reigns?"

"Thy brother is chosen and crowned."

The face of the Earl grew red and pale in a breath, and successive emotions of envy and old rivalship, humbled pride and fierce discontent, passed across his turbulent heart. But these died away as the predominant thought of self-interest, and somewhat of that admiration for success which often seems like magnanimity in grasping minds, and something too of haughty exultation, that he stood a King's brother in the halls of his exile, came to chase away the more hostile and menacing feelings. Then Judith approached with joy on her brow, and said,—

"We shall no more eat the bread of dependence even at the hand of a father; and since Harold hath no dame to proclaim to the Church, and to place on the dais, thy wife, O my Tostig, will have state in fair England little less than her sister in Rouen."

"Methinks so will it be," said Tostig. "How now, nuncius? why lookest thou so grim, and why shakest thou thy head?"

"Small chance for thy dame to keep state in the halls of the King; small hope for thyself to win back thy broad earldom. But a few weeks ere thy brother won the crown, he won also a bride in the house of thy spoiler and foe. Aldyth, the sister of Edwin and Morcar, is Lady of England; and that union shuts thee out from Northumbria for ever."

At these words, as if stricken by some deadly and inexpressible insult, the Earl recoiled, and stood a moment mute with rage and amaze. His singular beauty became distorted into the lineaments of a fiend. He stamped with his foot, as he thundered a terrible curse. Then haughtily waving his hand to the bode, in sign of dismissal, he strode to and fro the room in gloomy perturbation.

Judith, like her sister Matilda, a woman fierce and vindictive, continued, by that sharp venom that lies in the tongue of the sex, to incite still more the intense resentment of her lord. Perhaps some female jealousies of Aldyth might contribute to increase her own indignation. But without such frivolous addition to anger, there was cause eno' in this marriage thoroughly to complete the alienation between the King and his brother. It was impossible that one so revengeful as Tostig should not cherish the deepest animosity, not only against the people that had rejected, but the new Earl that had succeeded him. In wedding the sister of this fortunate rival and despoiler, Harold could not, therefore, but gall him in his most sensitive sores of soul. The King, thus, formally approved and sanctioned his ejection, solemnly took part with his foe, robbed him of all legal chance of recovering his dominions, and, in the words of the bode, "shut him out from Northumbria for ever." Nor was this even all. Grant his return to England; grant a reconciliation with Harold; still those abhorred and more fortunate enemies, necessarily made now the most intimate part of the king's family, must be most in his confidence, would curb and chafe and encounter Tostig in every scheme for his personal aggrandisement. His foes, in a word, were in the camp of his brother.

While gnashing his teeth with a wrath the more deadly because he saw not yet his way to retribution,—Judith, pursuing the separate thread of her own cogitations, said—

"And if my sister's lord the Count of the Normans, had, as rightly he ought to have, succeeded his cousin the Monk-king, then I should have a sister on the throne, and thou in her husband a brother more tender than Harold. One who supports his barons with sword and mail, and gives the villeins rebelling against them but the brand and the cord."

"Ho!" cried Tostig, stopping suddenly in his disordered strides, "Kiss me, wife, for those words! They have helped thee to power, and lit me to revenge. If thou wouldst send love to thy sister, take graphium and parchment, and write fast as a scribe. Ere the sun is an hour older, I am on my road to Count William."

CHAPTER V.

The Duke of the Normans was in the forest, or park land, of Rouvray, and his Quens and his knights stood around him, expecting some new proof of his strength and his skill with the bow. For the Duke was trying some arrows, a weapon he was ever employed in seeking to improve; sometimes shortening, sometimes lengthening, the shaft; and suiting the wing of the feather, and the weight of the point, to the nicest refinement in the law of mechanics. Gay and debonnair, in the brisk fresh air of the frosty winter, the great Count jested and laughed as the squires fastened a live bird by the string to a stake in the distant sward; and "*Pardex*," said Duke William, "Conan of Bretagne, and Philip of France, leave us now so unkindly in peace, that I trow we shall never again have larger butt for our arrows than the breast of yon poor plumed trembler."

As the Duke spoke and laughed, all the sere boughs behind him rattled and cranched, and a horse at full speed came rushing over the hard rime of the sward. The Duke's smile vanished in the frown of his pride. "Bold rider and graceless," quoth he, "who thus comes in the presence of counts and princes?"

Right up to Duke William spurred the rider, and then leaped from his steed; vest and mantle, yet more rich than the Duke's, all tattered and soiled. No knee bent the rider, no cap did he doff; but, seizing the startled Norman with the gripe of a hand as strong as his own, he led him aside from the courtiers, and said,—

"Thou knowest me, William? though not thus alone should I come to thy court, if I did not bring thee a crown."

"Welcome, brave Tostig!" said the Duke, marvelling. "What meanest thou? nought but good, by thy words and thy smile."

"Edward sleeps with the dead!—and Harold is King of all England!"

"King!—England!—King!" faltered William, stammering in his agitation. "Edward dead!—Saints rest him! England then is *mine!* King!—*I* am the King! Harold hath sworn it; my Quens and prelates heard him; the bones of the saints attest the oath!"

"Somewhat of this have I vaguely learned from our *beau-père* Count Baldwin; more will I learn at thy leisure; but take, meanwhile, my word as *Miles* and Saxon,—never, while there is breath on his lips, or one beat in his heart, will my brother, Lord Harold, give an inch of English land to the Norman."

William turned pale and faint with emotion, and leant for support against a leafless oak.

Busy were the rumors, and anxious the watch, of the Quens and knights, as their Prince stood long in the distant glade, conferring with the rider, whom one or two of them had recognized as Tostig, the spouse of Matilda's sister.

At length, side by side, still talking earnestly, they regained the group; and William, summoning the Lord of Tancarville, bade him conduct Tostig to Rouen, the towers of which rose through the forest trees. "Rest and refresh thee, noble kinsman," said the Duke; "see and talk with Matilda. I will join thee anon."

The Earl remounted his steed, and saluting the company with a wild and hasty grace, soon vanished amidst the groves. Then William, seating himself on the sward, mechanically unstrung his bow, sighing oft,

and oft frowning; and without vouchsafing other word to his lords than "No further sport to day!" rose slowly, and went alone through the thickest parts of the forest. But his faithful Fitzosborne marked his gloom, and fondly followed him. The Duke arrived at the borders of the Seine, where his galley waited him. He entered, sat down on the bench, and took no notice of Fitzosborne, who quietly stepped in after his lord, and placed himself on another bench.

The little voyage to Rouen was performed in silence; and as soon as he had gained his palace, without seeking either Tostig or Matilda, the Duke turned into the vast hall, in which he was wont to hold council with his barons; and walked to and fro, "often," say the chronicles, "changing posture and attitude, and oft loosening and tightening, and drawing into knots, the strings of his mantle."

Fitzosborne, meanwhile, had sought the ex-Earl, who was closeted with Matilda; and now returning, he went boldly up to the Duke, whom no one else dared approach, and said—

"Why, my liege, seek to conceal what is already known—what ere the eve will be in the mouths of all? You are troubled that Edward is dead, and that Harold, violating his oath, has seized the English realm."

"Truly," said the Duke mildly, and with the tone of a meek man much injured; "my dear cousin's death, and the wrongs I have received from Harold, touch me nearly."

Then said Fitzosborne, with that philosophy, half grave as became the Scandinavian, half gay as became the Frank: "No man should grieve for what he can help—still less for what he cannot help. For Edward's death, I trow, remedy there is none; but for Harold's treason, yea! Have you not a noble host of knights and warriors? What want you to destroy the Saxon and seize his realm? What but a bold heart? A great deed once well begun, is half done. Begin, Count of the Normans, and we will complete the rest."

Starting from his sorely tasked dissimulation; for all William needed, and all of which he doubted, was the aid of his haughty barons; the Duke raised his head, and his eyes shone out.

"Ha, sayest thou so! then, by the Splendor of God, we will do this deed. Haste thou—rouse hearts, nerve hands—promise, menace, win! Broad are the lands of England, and generous a conqueror's hand. Go and prepare all my faithful lords for a council, nobler than ever yet stirred the hearts and strung the hands of the sons of Rou."

CHAPTER VI.

Brief was the sojourn of Tostig at the court of Rouen; speedily made the contract between the grasping Duke and the revengeful traitor. All that had been promised to Harold, was now pledged to Tostig—if the last would assist the Norman to the English throne.

At heart, however, Tostig was ill satisfied. His chance conversations with the principal barons, who seemed to look upon the conquest of England as the dream of a madman, showed him how doubtful it was that William could induce his Queens to a service, to which the tenure of their fiefs did not appear to compel them; and at all events, Tostig prognosticated delays, that little suited his fiery impatience. He accepted the offer of some two or three ships, which William put at his disposal, under pretence to reconnoitre the Northumbrian coasts, and there attempt a rising in his own favor. But his discontent was increased by the smallness of the aid afforded him; for William, ever suspicious, distrusted both his faith and his power. Tostig, with all his vices, was a poor dissimulator, and his sullen spirit betrayed itself when he took leave of his host.

"Chance what may," said the fierce Saxon, "no stranger shall seize the English crown without my aid. I offer it first to thee. But thou must come to take it in time, or——"

"Or what?" asked the Duke, gnawing his lip.

"Or the Father race of Rou will be before thee! My horse paws without. Farewell to thee, Norman; sharpen thy swords, hew out thy vessels, and goad thy slow barons."

Scarce had Tostig departed, ere William began to repent that he had so let him de-

part; but seeking counsel of Lanfranc, that wise minister reassured him.

"Fear no rival, son and lord," said he. "The bones of the dead are on thy side, and little thou knowest, as yet, how mighty their fleshless arms! All Tostig can do is to distract the forces of Harold. Leave him to work out his worst; nor then be in haste. Much hath yet to be done—cloud must gather and fire must form, ere the bolt can be launched. Send to Harold mildly, and gently remind him of oath, and of relics—of treaty and pledge. Put right on thy side, and then——"

"Ah, what then?"

"Rome shall curse the forsworn—Rome shall hallow thy banner; this be no strife of force against force, but a war of religion; and thou shalt have on thy side the conscience of man, and the arm of the Church."

Meanwhile, Tostig embarked at Harfleur; but instead of sailing to the northern coasts of England, he made for one of the Flemish ports: and there, under various pretences, new manned the Norman vessels with Flemings, Fins and Northmen. His meditations during his voyage had decided him not to trust to William; and he now bent his course, with fair wind and favoring weather, to the shores of his maternal uncle, King Sweyn of Denmark.

In truth, to all probable calculation, his change of purpose was politic. The fleets of England were numerous, and her seamen renowned. The Normans had neither experience nor fame in naval fights; their navy itself was scarcely formed. Thus, even William's landing in England was an enterprise arduous and dubious. Moreover, even granting the amplest success, would not this Norman Prince, so profound and ambitious, be a more troublesome lord to Earl Tostig than his own uncle Sweyn?

So, forgetful of the compact at Rouen, no sooner had the Saxon lord come in presence of the King of the Danes, then he urged on his kinsman the glory of winning again the sceptre of Canute.

A brave, but a cautious and wily veteran, was King Sweyn; and a few days before Tostig arrived, he had received letters from his sister Githa, who, true to Godwin's command, had held all that Harold did and counselled, as between himself and his brother, wise and just. These letters had placed the Dane on his guard, and shown him the true state of affairs in England. So King Sweyn, smiling, thus answered his nephew Tostig:—

"A great man was Canute, a small man am I: scarce can I keep my Danish dominion from the gripe of the Norwegian, while Canute took Norway without slash and blow;* but great as he was, England cost him hard fighting to win, and sore peril to keep. Wherefore, best for the small man to rule by the light of his own little sense, nor venture to count on the luck of great Canute; —for luck but goes with the great."

"Thine answer," said Tostig, with a bitter sneer, "is not what I expected from an uncle and warrior. But other chiefs may be found less afraid of the luck of high deeds."

"So," saith the Norwegian chronicler, "not just the best friends, the Earl left the King," and went on in haste to Harold Hardrada of Norway.

True Hero of the North, true darling of War and of Song, was Harold Hardrada! At the terrible battle of Stiklestad, at which his brother, St. Olave, had fallen, he was but fifteen years of age, but his body was covered with the wounds of a veteran. Escaping from the field, he lay concealed in the house of a Bonder peasant, remote in deep forests, till his wounds were healed. Thence, chaunting by the way (for a poet's soul burned bright in Hardrada), "That a day would come when his name would be great in the land he now left," he went on into Sweden, thence into Russia, and after wild adventures in the East, joined, with the bold troop he had collected around him, that famous body guard of the Greek emperors,† called the Væringers, and of these he became the chief. Jealousies between himself and the Greek

* "Snorro Sturleson." Laing.

† The Væringers, or Varangi, mostly Northmen; this redoubtable force, the Janissaries of the Byzantine empire, afforded brilliant field, both of fortune and war, to the discontented spirits, or outlawed heroes of the North. It was joined afterwards by many of the bravest and best born of the Saxon nobles, refusing to dwell under the yoke of the Norman. Scott, in "Count Robert of Paris," which, if not one of his best romances, is yet full of truth and beauty, has described this renowned band with much poetical vigor and historical fidelity.

General of the Imperial forces (whom the Norwegian chronicler calls Gyrger), ended in Harold's retirement with his Væringers into the Saracen land of Africa. Eighty castles stormed and taken, vast plunder in gold and in jewels, and nobler meed in the song of the Scald, and the praise of the brave, attested the prowess of the great Scandinavian. New laurels, blood-stained, new treasures, sword-won, awaited him in Sicily; and thence, rough foretype of the coming crusader, he passed on to Jerusalem. His sword swept before him Moslem and robber. He bathed in Jordan, and knelt at the Holy Cross.

Returned to Constantinople, the desire for his northern home seized Hardrada. There he heard that his nephew Magnus, the illegitimate son of St. Olave, had become king of Norway,—and he himself aspired to a throne. So he gave up his command under Zoe the empress; but, if Scald be believed, Zoe the empress loved the bold chief, whose heart was set on Maria her niece. To detain Hardrada, a charge of mal-appropriation, whether of pay or of booty, was brought against him. He was cast into prison. But when the brave are in danger, the saints send the fair to their help! Moved by a holy dream, a Greek lady lowered ropes from the roof of the tower to the dungeon wherein Hardrada was cast. He escaped from the prison, he aroused his Væringers, they flocked round their chief; he went to the house of his lady Maria, bore her off to the galley, put out into the Black Sea, reached Novgorod (at the friendly court of whose king he had safely lodged his vast spoils), sailed home to the north; and, after such feats as became sea-king of old, received half of Norway from Magnus, and on the death of his nephew the whole of that kingdom passed to his sway. A king so wise and so wealthy, so bold and so dread, had never yet been known in the north. And this was the king to whom came Tostig the Earl, with the offer of England's crown.

It was one of the glorious nights of the north, and winter had already begun to melt into early spring, when two men sate under a kind of rustic porch of rough pine-logs, not very unlike those seen now in Switzerland and the Tyrol. This porch was constructed before a private door, to the rear of a long, low, irregular building of wood which enclosed two or more court-yards, and covering an immense space of ground. This private door seemed placed for the purpose of immediate descent to the sea; for the ledge of the rock over which the log-porch spread its rude roof, jutted over the ocean; and from it a rugged stair, cut through the crag, descended to the beach. The shore, with bold, strange, grotesque slab, and peak, and splinter, curved into a large creek; and close under the cliff were moored seven warships, high and tall, with prows and sterns all gorgeous with gilding in the light of the splendid moon. And that rude timber house, which seemed but a chain of barbarian huts linked into one, was a land palace of Hardrada of Norway; but the true halls of his royalty, the true seats of his empire, were the decks of those lofty warships.

Through the small lattice-work of the windows of the log-house, lights blazed; from the roof-top smoke curled; from the hall on the other side of the dwelling, came the din of tumultuous wassail, but the intense stillness of the outer air, hushed in frost, and luminous with stars, contrasted and seemed to rebuke the gross sounds of human revel. And that northern night seemed almost as bright as, (but how much more augustly calm, than) the noon of the golden south!

On a table within the ample porch was an immense bowl of birchwood, mounted in silver, and filled with potent drink, and two huge horns, of size suiting the mighty wassailers of the age. The two men seemed to care nought for the stern air of the cold night—true that they were wrapped in furs reft from the Polar bear. But each had hot thoughts within, that gave greater warmth to the veins than the bowl or the bearskin.

They were host and guest; and as if with the restlessness of his thoughts, the host arose from his seat, and passed through the porch and stood on the bleak rock under the light of the moon; and so seen, he seemed scarcely human, but some war-chief of the farthest time,—yea, of a time ere the deluge had shivered those rocks, and left beds on the land for the realm of that icy sea. For Harold Hardrada was in height above all

the children of modern men. Five ells of Norway made the height of Harold Hardrada.* Nor was this stature accompanied by any of those imperfections in symmetry, nor by that heaviness of aspect, which generally render any remarkable excess above human stature and strength rather monstrous than commanding. On the contrary, his proportions were just, his appearance noble; and the sole defect that the chronicler remarks in his shape, was "that his hands and feet were large, but these were well made." †

His face had all the fair beauty of the Norseman; his hair, parted in locks of gold over a brow that bespoke the daring of the warrior and the genius of the bard, fell in glittering profusion to his shoulders; a short beard and long moustache of the same color as the hair, carefully trimmed, added to the grand and masculine beauty of the countenance, in which the only blemish was the peculiarity of one eyebrow being somewhat higher than the other,‡ which gave something more sinister to his frown, something more arch to his smile. For, quick of impulse, the Poet-Titan smiled and frowned often.

Harold Hardrada stood in the light of the moon, and gazing thoughtfully on the luminous sea. Tostig marked him for some moments where he sate in the porch, and then rose and joined him.

"Why should my words so disturb thee, O king of the Norsemen?"

"Is glory, then, a drug that soothes to sleep?" returned the Norwegian.

"I like thine answer," said Tostig, smiling, "and I like still more to watch thine eye gazing on the prows of thy war-ships. Strange indeed it were if thou, who hast been fighting fifteen years for the petty kingdom of Denmark, shouldst hesitate now, when all England lies before thee to seize."

"I hestitate," replied the King, "because he whom Fortune has befriended so long, should beware how he strain her favors too far. Eighteen pitched battles fought I in the Saracen land, and in every one was a victor—never, at home or abroad, have I known shame and defeat. Doth the wind always blow from one point?—and is Fate less unstable than the wind?"

"Now, out on thee, Harold Hardrada," said Tostig the fierce; "the good pilot wins his way through all winds, and the brave heart fastens fate to its flag. All men allow that the North never had warrior like thee; and now, in the mid-day of manhood, wilt thou consent to repose on the mere triumph of youth?"

"Nay," said the King, who, like all true poets, had something of the deep sense of a sage, and was, indeed, regarded as the most prudent as well as the most adventurous chief in the North land,—"nay, it is not by such words, which my soul seconds too well, that thou canst entrap a ruler of men. Thou must show me the chances of success, as thou wouldst to a gray-beard. For we should be as old men before we engage, and as youths when we wish to perform."

Then the traitor succinctly detailed all the weak points in the rule of his brother. A treasury exhausted by the lavish and profitless waste of Edward; a land without castle or bulwark, even at the mouths of the rivers; a people grown inert by long peace, and so accustomed to own lord and king in the northern invaders, that a single successful battle might induce half the population to insist on the Saxon coming to terms with the foe, and yielding, as Ironside did to Canute, one half of the realm. He enlarged on the terror of the Norsemen that still existed throughout England, and the affinity between the Northumbrians and East Anglians, with the race of Hardrada. That affinity would not prevent them from resisting at the first; but grant success, and it would reconcile them to the after sway. And, finally, he aroused Hardrada's emulation by the spur of the news, that the Count of the Normans

* Laing's Snorro Sturleson.—"The old Norwegian ell was less than the present ell; and Thorlasius reckons, in a note on this chapter, that Harold's stature would be about four Danish ells; viz. about eight feet."—Laing's note to the text. Allowing for the exaggeration of the chronicler, it seems probable, at least, that Hardrada exceeded seven feet. Since (as Laing remarks in the same note), and as we shall see hereafter, "our English Harold offered him, according to both English and Danish authority, seven feet of land for a grave, or *as much more* as his stature exceeding that of other men, might require."

† Snorro Sturleson. See note (*q*), at the end.

‡ Snorro Sturleson.

would seize the prize if he himself delayed to forestall him.

These various representations, and the remembrance of Canute's victory, decided Hardrada; and, when Tostig ceased, he stretched his hand towards his slumbering war-ships, and exclaimed:

"Eno'; you have whetted the beaks of the ravens, and harnessed the steeds of the sea!"

CHAPTER VII.

MEANWHILE, King Harold of England had made himself dear to his people, and been true to the fame he had won as Harold the Earl. From the moment of his accession, "he showed himself pious, humble, and affable,* and omitted no occasion to show any token of bounteous liberality, gentleness, and courteous behavior."—"The grievous customs also, and taxes which his predecessors had raised, he either abolished or diminished; the ordinary wages of his servants and men-of-war he increased, and further showed himself very well bent to all virtue and goodness." †

Extracting the pith from these eulogies, it is clear that, as wise statesman no less than as good king, Harold sought to strengthen himself in the three great elements of regal power;—Conciliation of the Church, which had been opposed to his father; The popular affection, on which his sole claim to the crown reposed; And the military force of the land, which had been neglected in the reign of his peaceful predecessor.

To the young Atheling he accorded a respect not before paid to him; and, while investing the descendant of the ancient line with princely state, and endowing him with large domains, his soul, too great for jealousy, sought to give more substantial power to his own most legitimate rival, by tender care and noble counsels,—by efforts to raise a character feeble by nature, and denationalized by foreign rearing. In the same broad and generous policy, Harold encouraged all the merchants from other countries who had settled in England, nor were even such Normans as had escaped the general sentence of banishment on Godwin's return, disturbed in their possessions. "In brief," saith the Anglo-Norman chronicler,* "no man was more prudent in the land, more valiant in arms, in the law more sagacious, in all probity more accomplished:" and "Ever active," says more mournfully the Saxon writer, "for the good of his country, he spared himself no fatigue by land or by sea." †

From this time, Harold's private life ceased. Love and its charms were no more. The glow of romance had vanished. He was not one man; he was the state, the representative, the incarnation of Saxon England: his sway and the Saxon freedom, to live or fall together!

The soul really grand is only tested in its errors. As we know the true might of the intellect by the rich resources and patient strength with which it redeems a failure, so do we prove the elevation of the soul by its courageous return into light, its instinctive rebound into higher air, after some error that has darkened its vision and soiled its plumes. A spirit less noble and pure than Harold's, once entering on the dismal world of enchanted superstition, had habituated itself to that nether atmosphere; once misled from hardy truth and healthful reason, it had plunged deeper and deeper into the maze. But, unlike his contemporary, Macbeth, the Man escaped from the lures of the Fiend. Not as Hecate in hell, but as Dian in heaven, did he confront the pale Goddess of Night. Before that hour in which he had deserted the human judgment for the ghostly delusion; before that day in which the brave heart, in its sudden desertion, had humbled his pride—the man, in his nature, was more strong than the god. Now, purified by the flame that had scorched, and more nerved from the fall that had stunned,—that great soul rose sublime through the wrecks of the Past, serene through the clouds of the Future, concen-

* Hoveden.

† Holinshed. Nearly all chroniclers (even, with scarce an exception, those most favoring the Normans), concur in the abilities and merits of Harold as a king.

* "Vit. Had, Chron. Ang. Norrolm." ii. 243.

† Hoveden.

tring in its solitude the destinies of Mankind, and strong with instinctive Eternity amidst all the terrors of Time.

King Harold came from York, whither he had gone to cement the new power of Morcar, in Northumbria, and personally to confirm the allegiance of the Anglo-Danes:—King Harold came from York, and in the halls of Westminster he found a monk who awaited him with the messages of William the Norman.

Bare-footed, and serge-garbed, the Norman envoy strode to the Saxon's chair of state. His form was worn with mortification and fast, and his face was hueless and livid, with the perpetual struggle between zeal and the flesh.

"Thus saith William, Count of the Normans," began Hugues Maigrot, the monk.

"With grief and amaze hath he heard that you, O Harold, his sworn liege-man, have, contrary to oath and to fealty, assumed the crown that belongs to himself. But, confiding in thy conscience, and forgiving a moment's weakness, he summons thee, mildly and brother-like, to fulfil thy vow. Send thy sister, that he may give her in marriage to one of his Quens. Give him up the stronghold of Dover; march to thy coast with thine armies to aid him,—thy liege lord,—and secure him the heritage of Edward his cousin. And thou shalt reign at his right-hand, his daughter thy bride, Northumbria thy fief, and the saints thy protectors."

The King's lip was firm, though pale, as he answered:—

"My young sister, alas! is no more: seven nights after I ascended the throne, she died: her dust in the grave is all I could send to the arms of the bridegroom. I cannot wed the child of thy Count: the wife of Harold sits beside him." And he pointed to the proud beauty of Aldyth, enthroned under the drapery of gold. "For the vow that I took, I deny it not. But from a vow of compulsion, menaced with unworthy captivity, extorted from my lips by the very need of the land whose freedom had been bound in my chains—from a vow so compelled, Church and conscience absolve me. If the vow of a maiden on whom to bestow but her hand, when unknown to her parents, is judged invalid by the church, how much more invalid the oath that would bestow on a stranger the fates of a nation,* against its knowledge, and unconsulting its laws! This royalty of England hath ever rested on the will of the people, declared through its chiefs in their solemn assembly. They alone who could bestow it, have bestowed it on me:—I have no power to resign it to another—and were I in my grave, the trust of the crown would not pass to the Norman, but return to the Saxon people."

"Is this, then, thy answer, unhappy son?" said the monk, with a sullen and gloomy aspect.

"Such is my answer."

"Then, sorrowing for thee, I utter the words of William. 'With sword and with mail will he come to punish the perjurer; and by the aid of St. Michael, archangel of war, he will conquer his own.' Amen!"

"By sea and by land, with sword and with mail, will we meet the invader," answered the King, with a flashing eye. "Thou hast said:—so depart."

The monk turned and withdrew.

"Let the priest's insolence chafe thee not, sweet lord," said Aldyth. "For the vow which thou mightest take as subject, what matters it now thou art king?"

Harold made no answer to Aldyth, but turned to his Chamberlain, who stood behind his throne chair.

"Are my brothers without?"

"They are: and my lord the King's chosen council."

"Admit them: pardon, Aldyth; affairs fit only for men claim me now."

The Lady of England took the hint, and rose.

"But the even-mete will summon thee soon," said she.

Harold, who had already descended from his chair of state, and was bending over a casket of papers on the table, replied,—

"There is food *here* till the morrow; wait me not."

Aldyth sighed, and withdrew at the one door, while the thegns most in Harold's confidence, entered at the other. But, once surrounded by her maidens, Aldyth forgot all, save that she was again a queen,—forgot

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* Malmesbury.

all, even to the earlier and less gorgeous diadem which her lord's hand had shattered on the brows of the son of Pendragon.

Leofwine, still gay and blithe-hearted, entered first: Gurth followed, then Haco, then some half score of the greater thegns.

They seated themselves at the table, and Gurth spoke first—

"Tostig has been with Count William."

"I know it," said Harold.

"It is rumored that he has passed to our uncle Sweyn."

"I foresaw it," said the King.

"And that Sweyn will aid him to reconquer England for the Dane."

"My bode reached Sweyn, with letters from Githa, before Tostig; my bode has returned this day. Sweyn has dismissed Tostig: Sweyn will send fifty ships, armed with picked men, to the aid of England."

"Brother," cried Leofwine, admiringly, "thou providest against danger ere we but surmise it."

"Tostig," continued the King, unheeding the compliment, "will be the first assailant: him we must meet. His fast friend is Malcolm of Scotland: him we must secure. Go thou, Leofwine, with these letters to Malcolm.—The next fear is from the Welch. Go thou, Edwin of Mercia, to the princes of Wales. On thy way, strengthen the forts and deepen the dykes of the marches. These tablets hold thy instructions. The Norman, as doubtless ye know, my thegns, hath send to demand our crown and hath announced the coming of his war With the dawn I depart to our port at Sandwich,* to muster our fleets. Thou with me, Gurth."

"These preparations need much treasure," said an old thegn, "and thou hast lessened the taxes at the hour of need."

"Not yet is it the hour of need. When it comes, our people will the more readily meet it with their gold as with their iron. There was great wealth in the house of Godwin; that wealth mans the ships of England. What hast thou there, Haco?"

"Thy new-issued coin: it hath on its reverse the word 'PEACE.'" †

Who ever saw one of those coins of the Last Saxon King, the bold simple head on the one side, that single word "Peace" on the other, and did not feel awed and touched! What pathos in that word compared with the fate which it failed to propitiate!

"Peace," said Harold: "to all that doth not render peace, slavery. Yea, may I live to leave peace to our children! Now, peace only rests on our preparation for war. You, Morcar, will return with all speed to York, and look well to the mouth of the Humber."

Then, turning to each of the thegns successively, he gave to each his post and his duty; and that done, converse grew more general. The many things needful that had been long rotting in neglect under the Monk-king, and now sprung up, craving instant reform, occupied them long and anxiously. But cheered and inspirited by the vigor and foresight of Harold, whose earlier slowness of character seemed winged by the occasion into rapid decision (as is not uncommon with the Englishman), all difficulties seemed light, and hope and courage were in every breast.

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK went Hugues Maigrot, the monk, to William, and told the reply of Harold to the Duke, in the presence of Lanfranc. William himself heard it in gloomy silence, for Fitzosborne as yet had been wholly unsuccessful in stirring up the Norman barons to an expedition so hazardous, in a cause so doubtful; and though prepared for the defiance of Harold, the Duke was not prepared with the means to enforce his threats and make good his claim.

So great was his abstraction, that he suffered the Lombard to dismiss the monk without a word spoken by him; and he was first startled from his reverie by Lanfranc's pale hand on his vast shoulder, and Lanfranc's low voice in his dreamy ear—

"Up! Hero of Europe: for thy cause is won! Up! and write with thy bold characters, bold as if graved with the point of the sword, my credentials to Rome. Let me depart ere the sun sets: and as I go, look on the sinking orb, and behold the sun of the Saxon that sets evermore on England!"

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* Supposed to be our first port for ship-building.—FOSBROOKE, p. 320.

† *Pax.*

Then briefly, that ablest statesman of the age, (and forgive him, despite our modern lights, we must; for, sincere son of the Church, he regarded the violated oath of Harold as entailing the legitimate forfeiture of his realm, and, ignorant of true political freedom, looked upon Church and Learning as the only civilizers of men,) then, briefly, Lanfranc detailed to the listening Norman, the outline of the arguments by which he intended to move the Pontifical court to the Norman side; and enlarged upon the vast accession throughout all Europe which the solemn sanction of the Church would bring to his strength. William's re-awaking and ready intellect soon seized upon the importance of the object pressed upon him. He interrupted the Lombard, drew pen and parchment towards him, and wrote rapidly. Horses were harnessed, horsemen equipped in haste, and with no unfitting retinue Lanfranc departed on the mission, the most important in its consequences that ever passed from potentate to pontiff.* Rebraced to its purpose by Lanfranc's cheering assurances, the resolute, indomitable soul of William now applied itself, night and day, to the difficult task of rousing his haughty vavasours. Yet weeks passed before he could even meet a select council composed of his own kinsmen and most trusted lords. These, however, privately won over, promised to serve him "with body and goods." But one and all they told him, he must gain the consent of the whole principality in a general council. That council was convened: thither came not only lords and knights, but merchants and traders,—all the rising middle class of a thriving state.

The Duke bared his wrongs, his claims, and his schemes. The assembly would not or did not discuss the matter in his presence, they would not be awed by its influence; and William retired from the hall. Various were the opinions, stormy the debate; and so great the disorder grew, that Fitzosborne, rising in the midst, exclaimed—

"Why this dispute?—why this unduteous discord? Is not William your lord? Hath he not need of you? Fail him now—and, you know him well—by G— he will remember it! Aid him—and you know him well—large are his rewards to service and love!"

Up rose at once baron and merchant; and when at last their spokesman was chosen, that spokesman said,—

"William is our lord; is it not enough to pay to our lord his dues? No aid do we owe beyond the seas! Sore harassed and taxed are we already by his wars! Let him fail in this strange and unparalleled hazard, and our land is undone!"

Loud applause followed this speech; the majority of the council were against the Duke.

"Then," said Fitzosborne craftily, "I, who know the means of each man present, will, with your leave, represent your necessities to your Count, and make such modest offer of assistance as may please ye, yet not chafe your liege."

Into the trap of this proposal the opponents fell; and Fitzosborne, at the head of the body, returned to William.

The Lord of Breteul approached the dais, on which William sate alone, his great sword in his hand, and thus spoke,—

"My liege, I may well say that never prince had people more leal than yours, nor that have more proved their faith and love by the burdens they have borne and the moneys they have granted."

An universal murmur of applause followed these words. "Good! good!" almost shouted the merchants especially. William's brows met, and he looked very terrible. The lord of Breteul gracefully waved his hand, and resumed,—

"Yea, my liege, much have they borne for your glory and need; much more will they bear."

The faces of the audience fell.

"Their service does not compel them to aid you beyond the seas."

The faces of the audience brightened.

"But now they *will* aid you, in the land of the Saxon as in that of the Frank."

"How?" cried a stray voice or two.

"Hush, O *gentilz amys*. Forward, then, O my liege, and spare them in nought. He

* Some of the Norman chroniclers state that Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been expelled from England at Godwin's return, was Lanfranc's companion in this mission; but more trustworthy authorities assure us that Robert had been dead some years before, not long surviving his return into Normandy.

who has hitherto supplied you with two good mounted soldiers, will now grant you four; and he who—"

"No, no, no!" roared two-thirds of the assembly; "we charged you with no such answer; we said not that, nor that shall it be!"

Out stepped a baron.

"Within this country, to defend it, we will serve our Count; but to aid him to conquer another man's country, no!"

Out stepped a knight.

"If once we rendered this double service, beyond seas as at home, it would be held a right and a custom hereafter; and we should be as mercenary soldiers, not free-born Normans."

Out stepped a merchant.

"And we and our children would be burdened for ever to feed one man's ambition, whenever he saw a king to dethrone, or a realm to seize."

And then cried a general chorous,—

"It shall not be—it shall not!"

The assembly broke at once into knots of tens, twenties, thirties, gesticulating and speaking aloud, like freemen in anger. And ere William, with all his prompt dissimulation, could do more than smother his rage, and sit griping his swort hilt, and setting his teeth, the assembly dispersed.

Such were the free souls of the Normans under the greatest of their chiefs; and had those souls been less free, England had not been enslaved in one age, to become free again, God grant, to the end of time!

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH the blue skies over England there rushed the bright stranger—a meteor, a comet, a fiery star! "such as no man before ever saw;" it appeared on the 8th, before the kalends of May; seven nights did it shine,* and the faces of sleepless men were pale under the angry glare.

The river of Thames rushed blood-red in the beam, the winds at play on the broad waves of the Humber, broke the surge of the billows into sparkles of fire. With three streamers, sharp and long as the sting of a dragon, the foreboder of wrath rushed through the hosts of the stars. On every ruinous fort, by sea-coast and march, the warder crossed his breast to behold it; on hill and in thoroughfare, crowds nightly assembled to gaze on the terrible star. Muttering hymns, monks huddled together round the altars, as if to exorcise the land of a demon. The gravestone of the Saxon father-chief was lit up, as with the coil of the lightning; and the Morthwyrtha looked from the mound, and saw in her visions of awe the Valkyrs in the train of the fiery star.

On the roof of his palace stood Harold the King, and with folded arms he looked on the Rider of Night. And up the stairs of the turret came the soft steps of Haco, and stealing near to the King, he said,—

"Arm in haste, for the bodes have come breathless to tell thee that Tostig, thy brother, with pirate and war-ship, is wasting thy shores and slaughtering thy people!"

CHAPTER X.

TOSTIG, with the ships he had gained both from Norman and Norwegian, recruited by Flemish adventurers, fled fast from the banners of Harold. After plundering the Isle of Wight, and the Hampshire coasts, he sailed up the Humber, where his vain heart had counted on friends yet left him in his ancient earldom; but Harold's soul of vigor was everywhere. Morcar, prepared by the King's bodes, encountered and chased the traitor, and, deserted by most of his ships, with but twelve small craft Tostig gained the shores of Scotland. There, again forestalled by the Saxon king, he failed in succor from Malcolm, and retreating to the Orkneys, waited the fleets of Hardrda.

And now Harold, thus at freedom for defence against a foe more formidable and less unnatural, hastened to make secure both the sea and the coast against William the Norman. "So great a ship force, so great a land force, no king in the land had before." All the summer, his fleets swept the channel; his forces "lay everywhere by the sea."

* Saxon Chronicle.

But alas! now came the time when the improvident waste of Edward began to be felt. Provisions and pay for the armaments failed.* On the defective resources at Harold's disposal, no modern historian hath sufficiently dwelt. The last Saxon king, the chosen of the people, had not those levies, and could impose not those burdens, which made his successors mighty in war; and men began now to think that, after all, there was no fear of this Norman invasion. The summer was gone; the autumn was come; was it likely that William would dare to trust himself in an enemy's country as the winter drew near? The Saxons—unlike their fiercer kindred of Scandinavia, had no pleasure in war;—they fought well in front of a foe, but they loathed the tedious preparations and costly sacrifices which prudence demanded for self-defence. They now revolted from a strain upon their energies, of the necessity of which they were not convinced! Joyous at the temporary defeat of Tostig, men said, "Marry, a joke indeed, that the Norman will put his shaven head into the hornet's nest! Let him come, if he dare!"

Still, with desperate effort, and at much risk of popularity, Harold held together a force sufficent to repel any *single* invader. From the time of his accession his sleepless vigilance had kept watch on the Norman, and his spies brought him news of all that passed.

And now what had passed in the councils of William? The abrupt disappointment which the Grand Assembly had occasioned him did not last very long. Made aware that he could not trust to the spirit of an assembly, William now artfully summoned merchant, and knight, and baron, one by one. Submitted to the eloquence, the promises, the craft, of that master intellect, and to the awe of that imposing presence; unassisted by the courage which inferiors take from numbers, one by one yielded to the will of the Count, and subscribed his quota for moneys, for ships, and for men. And while this went on, Lanfranc was at work in the Vatican. At that time the Archdeacon of the Roman Church was the famous Hildebrand. This extraordinary man, fit fellow-spirit to Lanfranc, nursed one darling project, the success of which indeed founded the true temporal power of the Roman pontiffs. It was no less than that of converting the mere religious ascendancy of the Holy See into the actual sovereignty over the states of Christendom. The most immediate agents of this gigantic scheme were the Normans, who had conquered Naples by the arm of the adventurer Robert Guiscard, and under the gonfanon of St. Peter. Most of the new Norman countships and dukedoms thus created in Italy had declared themselves fiefs of the Church; and the successor of the Apostle might well hope, by aid of the Norman priest-knights, to extend his sovereignty over Italy, and thence dictate to the kings beyond the Alps.

The aid of Hildebrand in behalf of William's claim was obtained at once by Lanfranc. The profound Archdeacon of Rome saw at a glance the immense power that would accrue to the Church by the mere act of arrogating to itself the disposition of crowns, subjecting rival princes to abide by its decision, and fixing the men of its choice on the thrones of the North. Despite all its slavish superstition, the Saxon Church was obnoxious to Rome. Even the pious Edward had offended, by withholding the old levy of Peter Pence; and simony, a crime peculiarly reprobated by the pontiff, was notorious in England. Therefore there was much to aid Hildebrand in the Assembly of the Cardinals, when he brought before them the oath of Harold, the violation of the sacred relics, and demanded that the pious Normans, true friends to the Roman Church, should be permitted to Christianize the barbarous Saxons,* and William be nominated as heir to a throne promised to him by Edward, and forfeited by the perjury of Harold. Nevertheless, to the honor of that assembly, and of man, there was a holy opposition to

* *Saxon Chronicle.*—"When it was the nativity of St. Mary, then were the men's provisions gone, and no man could any longer keep them there."

* It is curious to notice how England was represented as a country almost heathen; its conquest was regarded quite as a pious, benevolent act of charity—a sort of mission for converting the savages. And all this while England was under the most slavish ecclesiastical domination, and the priesthood possessed a third of its land! But the heart of England never forgave that league of the Pope with the Conqueror; and the seeds of the Reformed Religion were trampled deep into the Saxon soil by the feet of the invading Norman.

this wholesale barter of human rights—this sanction of an armed onslaught on a Christian people. "It is infamous," said the good, "to authorize homicide." But Hildebrand was all-powerful and prevailed.

William was at high feast with his barons when Lanfranc dismounted at his gates and entered his hall.

"Hail to thee, King of England!" he said. "I bring the bull that excommunicates Harold and his adherents; I bring to thee the gift of the Roman Church, the land and royalty of England. I bring to thee the gonfanon hallowed by the heir of the Apostle, and the very ring that contains the precious relic of the Apostle himself! Now who will shrink from thy side? Publish thy ban, not in Normandy alone, but in every region and realm where the Church is honored. This is the first war of the CROSS!"

Then indeed was it seen—that might of the Church! Soon as were made known the sanction and gifts of the Pope, all the continent stirred, as to the blast of the trump in the Crusade, of which that war was the herald. From Maine and from Anjou, from Poitou and Bretagne, from France and from Flanders, from Aquitaine and Burgundy, flashed the spear, galloped the steed. The robber-chiefs from the castles now gray on the Rhine; the hunters and bandits from the roots of the Alps; baron and knight, varlet and vagrant,—all came to the flag of the Church,—to the pillage of England. For side by side with the Pope's holy bull was the martial ban:—"Good pay and broad lands to every one who will serve Count William with spear, and with sword, and with cross-bow." And the Duke said to Fitzosborne, as he parcelled out the fair fields of England into Norman fiefs,—

"Harold hath not the strength of mind to promise the least of those things that belong to me. But I have the right to promise that which is mine, and also that which belongs to him. He must be the victor who can give away both his own and what belongs to his foe." *

* WILLIAM OF POITIERS.—The *naive* sagacity of this bandit argument, and the Norman's contempt for Harold's deficiency in "strength of mind," are exquisite illustrations of character.

All on the continent of Europe regarded England's king as accursed—William's enterprise as holy; and mothers who had turned pale when their sons went forth to the boar-chase, sent their darlings to enter their names, for the weal of their souls, in the swollen muster-roll of William the Norman. Every port now in Neustria was busy with terrible life; in every wood was heard the axe felling logs for the ships; from every anvil flew the sparks from the hammer, as iron took shape into helmet and sword. All things seemed to favor the Church's chosen one. Conan, Count of Bretagne, sent to claim the duchy of Normandy, as legitimate heir. A few days afterwards, Conan died, poisoned, (as had died his father before him,) by the mouth of his horn and the web of his gloves. And the new Count of Bretagne sent his sons to take part against Harold.

All the armament mustered at the roadstead of St. Valery, at the mouth of the Somme. But the winds were long hostile, and the rains fell in torrents.

CHAPTER XI.

AND now, while war thus hungered for England at the mouth of the Somme, the last and most renowned of the sea-kings, Harold Hardrada, entered his galley, the tallest and strongest of a fleet of three hundred sail, that peopled the seas round Solundir. And a man named Gyrdir, on board the King's ship, dreamed a dream.* He saw a great witch-wife standing on an isle of the Sulen, with a fork in one hand and a trough in the other.† He saw her pass over the whole fleet;—by each of the three hundred ships he saw her; and a fowl sat on the stern of each ship, and that fowl was a raven: and he heard the witch-wife sing this song:—

* Snorro Sturleson.

† Does any Scandinavian scholar know why the trough was so associated with the images of Scandinavian witchcraft? A witch was known, when seen behind, by a kind of trough-like shape; there must be some symbol, of very ancient mythology, in this superstition!

"From the East I allure him,
At the west I secure him;
In the feast I foresee
Rare the relics for me;
Red the drink, white the bones.

"The ravens sit greeding,
And waching, and heeding:
Thoro' wind, over water,
Comes scent of the slaughter,
And ravens sit greeding
Their share of the bones.

"Thoro' wind, thoro' weather,
We're sailing together;
I sail with the ravens;
I watch with the ravens;
I snatch from the ravens
My share of the bones."

There was also a man called Thord,* in a ship that lay near the King's; and he too dreamed a dream. He saw the fleet nearing land, and that land was England. And on the land was a battle array twofold, and many banners were flapping on both sides. And before the army of the land-folk was riding a huge witch-wife upon a wolf; the wolf had a man's carcase in his mouth, and the blood was dripping and dropping from his jaws; and when the wolf had eaten up that carcase, the witch-wife threw another into his jaws; and so, one after another; and the wolf cranched and swallowed them all. And the witch-wife sang this song:—

"The green-waving fields
Are hidden behind
The flash of the shields,
And the rush of the banners
That toss in the wind.

"But Skade's eagle eyes
Pierce the wall of the steel,
And behold from the skies
What the earth would conceal;
O'er the rush of the banners
She poises her wing,
And marks with a shadow
The brow of the King.

"And, in bode of his doom,
Jaw of Wolf, be the tomb
Of the bones and the flesh,
Gore bedabbled and fresh,
That cranch and that drip
Under fang and from lip,
As I ride in the van
Of the feasters on man,
With the King!

"Grim wolf, sate thy maw,
Full enow shall there be,
Hairy jaw, hungry maw,
Both for ye and for me!

"Meaner food be the feast
Of the fowl and the beast;
But the witch, for her share,
Takes the best of the fare:
And the witch shall be fed
With the king of the dead,
When she rides in the van,
Of the slayers of man,
With the King."

And King Harold dreamed a dream. And he saw before him his brother, St. Olave. And the dead, to the Scald-King, sang this song:—

"Bold as thou in the fight,
Blithe as thou in the hall,
Shone the noon of my might,
Ere the night of my fall!

"How humble is death,
And how haughty is life;
And how fleeting the breath
Between slumber and strife!

"All the earth is too narrow,
O life, for thy tread!
Two strides o'er the barrow
Can measure the dead.

"Yet mighty that space is
Which seemeth so small;
The realm of all races,
With room for them all!"

But Harold Hardrada scorned witch-wife and dream; and his fleets sailed on. Tostig joined him off the Orkney Isles, and this great armament soon came in sight of the shores of England. They landed at Cleveland,* and at the dread of the terrible Norsemen, the coatsmen fled or submitted. With booty and plunder they sailed on to Scarborough, but there the townsfolk were brave, and the walls were strong. The Norsemen ascended a hill above the town, lit a huge pile of wood, and tossed the burning piles down on the roofs. House after house caught the flame, and through the glare and the crash rushed the men of Hardrada. Great was the slaughter, and ample the plunder; and the town, awed and depeopled, submitted to flame and to sword.

Then the fleet sailed up the Humber and Ouse, and landed at Richall, not far from York; but Morcar, the Earl of Northumbria, came out with all his forces,—all the stout men and tall of the great race of the Anglo-Dane.

Then Hardrada advanced his flag, called

* Snorro Sturleson.

* Snorro Sturleson.

Land-Eyda, the "Ravager of the World," * and, chaunting a war-stave,—led his men to the onslaught.

The battle was fierce, but short. The English troops were defeated, they fled into York; and the Ravager of the World was borne in triumph to the gates of the town. An exiled chief, however tyrannous and hateful, hath ever some friends among the desperate and lawless; and success ever finds allies among the weak and the craven,—so many Northumbrians now came to the side of Tostig. Dissension and mutiny broke out amidst the garrison within; Morcar, unable to control the townsfolk, was driven forth with those still true to their country and King, and York agreed to open its gates to the conquering invader.

At the news of this foe on the north side of the land, King Harold was compelled to withdraw all the forces at watch in the south against the tardy invasion of William. It was the middle of September; eight months had elapsed since the Norman had launched forth his vaunting threat. Would he now dare to come?—Come or not, *that* foe was afar, and *this* was in the heart of the country!

Now, York having thus capitulated, all the land around was humbled and awed; and Hardrada and Tostig were blithe and gay; and many days, thought they, must pass ere Harold the King can come from the south to the north.

The camp of the Norsemen was at Stanford Bridge, and that day it was settled that they should formally enter York. Their ships lay in the river beyond; a large portion of the armament was with the ships. The day was warm, and the men with Hardrada had laid aside their heavy mail and were "making merry," talking of the plunder of York, jeering at Saxon valor, and gloating over thoughts of the Saxon maids, whom Saxon men had failed to protect,—when suddenly between them and the town rose and rolled a great cloud of dust. High it rose, and fast it rolled, and from the heart of the cloud shone the spear and the shield.

"What army comes yonder?" said Harold Hardrada.

"Surely," answered Tostig, "it comes from the town that we are to enter as conquerors, and can be but the friendly Northumbrians who have deserted Morcar for me."

Nearer and nearer came the force, and the shine of the arms was like the glancing of ice.

"Advance the World-Ravager!" cried Harold Hardrada, "draw up, and to arms!"

Then, picking out three of his briskest youths, he despatched them to the force on the river with orders to come up quick to the aid. For already, through the cloud and amidst the spears, was seen the flag of the English King. On the previous night King Harold had entered York, unknown to the invaders—appeased the mutiny—cheered the townsfolks; and now came like the thunderbolt borne by the winds, to clear the air of England from the clouds of the North.

Both armaments drew up in haste, and Hardrada formed his array in the form of a circle,—the line long but not deep, the wings curving round till they met,* shield to shield. Those who stood in the first rank set their spear shafts on the ground, the points level with the breast of a horseman; those in the second, with spears yet lower, level with the breast of a horse; thus forming a double palisade against the charge of cavalry. In the centre of this circle was placed the Ravager of the World, and round it a rampart of shields. Behind that rampart was the accustomed post at the onset of battle for the King and his body-guard. But Tostig was in front, with his own Northumbrian Lion banner, and his chosen men.

While this army was thus being formed, the English King was marshalling his force in the far more formidable tactics, which his military science had perfected from the warfare of the Danes. That form of battalion, invincible hitherto under his leadership, was in the manner of a wedge or triangle, thus △. So that, in attack, the men marched on the foe presenting the smallest possible surface to the missives, and, in defence, all three lines faced the assailants. King Harold cast his eye over the closing lines, and then,

* So Thierry translates the word: others, the Land-ravager. In Danish, the word is Land-ode, in Icelandic, Land-eydo.—Note to Thierry's "Hist. of the Conq. of England," book iii. vol. vi. p. 169 (of Hazlitt's translation).

* Snorro Sturleson.

turning to Gurth, who rode by his side, said,—

"Take one man from yon hostile army, and with what joy should we charge on the Northmen!"

"I conceive thee," answered Gurth mournfully, "and the same thought of that one man makes my arm feel palsied."

The King mused, and drew down the nasal bar of his helmet.

"Thegns," said he suddenly, to the score of riders who grouped round him, "follow." And shaking the rein of his horse, King Harold rode straight to that part of the hostile front from which rose, above the spears, the Northumbrian banner of Tostig. Wondering, but mute, the twenty thegns followed him. Before the grim array, and hard by Tostig's banner, the King checked his steed and cried,—

"Is Tostig, the son of Godwin and Githa, by the flag of the Northumbrian earldom?"

With his helmet raised, and his Norwegian mantle flowing over his mail, Earl Tostig rode forth at that voice, and came up to the speaker.*

"What wouldst thou with me, daring foe?"

The Saxon horseman paused, and his deep voice trembled tenderly, as he answered slowly,—

"Thy brother, King Harold, sends to salute thee. Let not the sons from the same womb wage unnatural war in the soil of their fathers."

"What will Harold the King give to his brother?" answered Tostig, "Northumbria already he hath bestowed on the son of his house's foe."

The Saxon hesitated, and a rider by his side took up the word.

"If the Northumbrians will receive thee again, Northumbria shalt thou have, and the King will bestow his late earldom of Wessex on Morcar; if the Northumbrians reject thee, thou shalt have all the lordships which King Harold hath promised to Gurth."

"This is well," answered Tostig; and he seemed to pause as in doubt;—when, made aware of this parley, King Harold Hardrara, on his coal-black steed, with his helm all shining with gold, rode from the lines, and came into hearing.

"Ha!" said Tostig then, turning round, as the giant form of the Norse king threw its vast shadow over the ground.

"And if I take the offer, what will Harold son of Godwin give to my friend and ally Hardrada of Norway?"

The Saxon rider reared his head at these words, and gazed on the large front of Hardrada, as he answered loud and distinct,—

"Seven feet of land for a grave, or, seeing that he is taller than other men, as much more as his corse may demand!"

"Then go back, and tell Harold my brother to get ready for battle; for never shall the Scalds and the warriors of Norway say that Tostig lured their king in his cause, to betray him to his foe. Here did he come, and here came I, to win as the brave win, or die as the brave die!"

A rider of younger and slighter form than the rest here whispered the Saxon King,—

"Delay no more, or thy men's hearts will fear treason."

"The tie is rent from my heart, O Haco," answered the King, "and the heart flies back to our England."

He waved his hand, turned his steed, and rode off. The eye of Hardrada followed the horseman.

"And who," he asked calmly, "is that man who spoke so well?" *

"King Harold!" answered Tostig, briefly.

"How," cried the Norseman, reddening, "how was not that made known to me before? Never should he have gone back,—never told hereafter the doom of this day!"

With all his ferocity, his envy, his grudge to Harold, and his treason to England, some rude notions of honor still lay confused in the breast of the Saxon; and he answered stoutly,—

"Imprudent was Harold's coming, and great his danger; but he came to offer me peace and dominion. Had I betrayed him, I had not been his foe, but his murderer!"

The Norse King smiled approvingly, and turning to his chiefs, said drily,—

"That man was shorter than some of us, but he rode firm in his stirrups."

* See Snorro Sturleson for this parley between Harold in *person* and Tostig. The account differs from the Saxon chroniclers, but in this particular instance is likely to be as accurate.

* Snorro Sturleson.

And then this extraordinary person, who united in himself all the types of an age that vanished forever in his grave, and who is the more interesting, as in him we see the race from which the Norman sprang, began, in the rich full voice that pealed deep as an organ, to chaunt his impromptu war-song. He halted in the midst, and with great composure said,—

"That verse is but ill-tuned: I must try a better." *

He passed his hand over his brow, mused an instant, and then, with his fair face all illumined, he burst forth as inspired.

This time, air, rhythm, words, all so chimed in with his own enthusiasm and that of his men, that the effect was inexpressible. It was, indeed, like the charm of those runes which are said to have maddened the Berserker with the frenzy of war.

Meanwhile the Saxon phalanx came on, slow and firm, and in a few minutes the battle began. It commenced first with the charge of the English cavalry (never numerous), led by Leofwine and Haco, but the double palisade of the Norman spears formed an impassable barrier; and the horsemen, recoiling from the frieze, road round the iron circle without other damage than the spear and javelin could effect. Meanwhile, King Harold, who had dismounted, marched, as was his wont, with the body of footmen. He kept his post in the hollow of the triangular wedge; whence he could best issue his orders. Avoiding the side over which Tostig presided, he halted his array in full centre of the enemy where the Ravager of the World, streaming high above the inner rampart of shields, showed the presence of the giant Hardrada.

The air was now literally darkened with the flights of arrows and spears; and in a war of missives, the Saxons were less skilled than the Norsemen. Still King Harold restrained the ardor of his men, who, sore harassed by the darts, yearned to close on the foe. He himself, standing on a little eminence, more exposed than his meanest soldier, deliberately eyed the sallies of the horse, and watched the moment he foresaw, when, encouraged by his own suspense, and the feeble attacks of the cavalry, the Norsemen would lift their spears from the ground, and advance themselves to the assault. That moment came; unable to withhold their own fiery zeal, stimulated by the tromp and the clash, and the war hymns of their King, and his choral Scalds, the Norsemen broke ground and came on.

"To your axes, and charge!" cried Harold; and passing at once from the centre to the front, he led on the array.

The impetus of that artful phalanx was tremendous; it pierced through the ring of the Norwegian; it clove into the rampart of shields; and King Harold's battle-axe was the first that shivered that wall of steel; his step the first that strode into the innermost circle that guarded the Ravager of the World.

Then forth, from under the shade of that great flag, came, himself also on foot, Harold Hardrada: shouting and chaunting, he leapt with long strides into the thick of the onslaught. He had flung away his shield, and swaying with both hands his enormous sword, he hewed down man after man, till space grew clear before him; and the English, recoiling in awe before an image of height and strength that seemed superhuman, left but one form standing firm, and in front, to oppose his way.

At that moment the whole strife seemed not to belong to an age comparatively modern, it took a character of remotest eld; and Thor and Odin seemed to have returned to the earth. Behind this towering and Titan warrior, their wild hair streaming long under their helms, came his Scalds, all singing their hymns, drunk with the madness of battle. And the Ravager of the World tossed and flapped as it followed, so that the vast raven depicted on its folds seemed horrid with life. And calm and alone, his eye watchful, his aze lifted, his foot ready for rush or for spring —but firm as an oak against flight—stood the Last of the Saxon Kings.

Down bounded Hardrada, and down shore his sword; King Harold's shield was cloven in two, and the force of the blow brought himself to his knee. But, as swift as the flash of that sword, he sprang to his feet; and while Hardrada still bowed his head, not recovered from the force of the blow, the axe of the Saxon came so full on his helmet,

* Snorro Sturleson.

that the giant reeled, dropped his sword, and staggered back; his Scalds and his Chiefs rushed around him. That gallant stand of King Harold saved his English from flight; and now, as they saw him almost lost in the throng, yet still cleaving his way—on, on—to the raven standard, they rallied with one heart, and shouting forth, "Out, out! Holy crosse!" forced their way to his side, and the fight now waged hot and equal, hand to hand. Meanwhile Hardrada, borne a little apart, and relieved from his dinted helmet, recovered the shock of the weightiest blow that had ever dimmed his eye and numbed his hand. Tossing the helmet on the ground, his bright locks glittering like sunbeams, he rushed back to the *mêlée*. Again helm and mail went down before him; again through the crowd he saw the arm that had smitten him; again he sprang forwards to finish the war with a blow,—when a shaft from some distant bow pierced the throat which the casque now left bare; a sound like the wail of a death-song murmured brokenly from his lips, which then gushed out with blood, and tossing up his arms wildly, he fell to the ground, a corpse. At that sight a yell of such terror and woe, and wrath all commingled, broke from the Norsemen, that it hushed the very war for the moment!

"On!" cried the Saxon King, "let our earth take its spoiler! On to the standard, and the day is our own!"

"On to the standard!" cried Haco, who, his horse slain under him, all bloody with wounds not his own, now came to the King's side. Grim and tall rose the standard, and the streamer shrieked and flapped in the wind as if the raven had voice, when right before Harold, right between him and the banner, stood Tostig his brother, known by the splendor of his mail, the gold work on his mantle—known by the fierce laugh, and defying voice.

"What matters!" cried Haco; "strike, O King, for thy crown!"

Harold's hand griped Haco's arm convulsively; he lowered his axe, turned round, and passed shudderingly away.

Both armies now paused from the attack; for both were thrown into great disorder, and each gladly gave respite to the other, to reform its own shattered array.

The Norsemen were not the soldiers to yield because their leader was slain—rather the more resolute to fight, since revenge was now added to valor; yet, but for the daring and promptness with which Tostig had cut his way to the standard, the day had been already decided.

During the pause, Harold, summoning Gurth, said to him in great emotion, "For the sake of Nature, for the love of God, go, O Gurth,—go to Tostig; urge him, now Hardrada is dead, urge him to peace. All that we can proffer with honor, proffer—quarter and free retreat to every Norseman.* Oh, save me, save us from a brother's blood!"

Gurth lifted his helmet, and kissed the mailed hand that grasped his own.

"I go," said he. And so, bare-headed, and with a single trumpeter, he went to the hostile lines.

Harold awaited him in great agitation; nor could any man have guessed what bitter and awful thoughts lay in that heart, from which, in the way to power, tie after tie had been wrenched away. He did not wait long; and even before Gurth rejoined him, he knew by an unanimous shout of fury, to which the clash of countless shields chimed in, that the mission had been in vain.

Tostig had refused to hear Gurth, save in presence of the Norwegian chiefs; and when the message had been delivered, they all cried, "We would rather fall one across the corpse of the other,† than leave a field in which our King was slain."

"Ye hear them," said Tostig: "as they speak, speak I."

"Not mine this guilt *too*, O God!" said Harold, solemnly lifting his hand on high. "Now, then, to duty."

By this time the Norwegian reinforcements had arrived from the ships, and this for a short time rendered the conflict, that immediately ensued, uncertain and critical. But Harold's generalship was now as consummate as his valor had been daring. He kept his men true to their irrefragable line. Even if fragments splintered off, each fragment threw itself into the form of the resistless wedge. One Norwegian, standing on the

* Sharon Turner's Anglo-Saxons, vol. ii. p. 396. Snorro Sturleson.

† Snorro Sturleson.

bridge of Stanford, long guarded that pass; and no less than forty Saxons are said to have perished by his arm. To him the English King sent a generous pledge, not only of safety for the life, but honor for the valor. The viking refused to surrender, and fell at last by a javelin from the hand of Haco. As if in him had been embodied the unyielding war-god of the Norsemen, in that death died the last hope of the vikings. They fell literally where they stood; many, from sheer exhaustion and the weight of their mail, died without a blow.* And in the shades of nightfall, Harold stood amidst the shattered rampart of shields, his foot on the corpse of the standard-bearer, his hand on the Ravager of the World.

"Thy brother's corpse is borne yonder," said Haco in the ear of the King, as, wiping the blood from his sword, he plunged it back into the sheath.

CHAPTER XII.

Young Olave, the son of Hardrada, had happily escaped the slaughter. A strong detachment of the Norwegians had still remained with the vessels; and amongst them some prudent old chiefs, who, foreseeing the probable results of the day, and knowing that Hardrada would never quit, save as a conqueror or a corpse, the field on which he had planted the Ravager of the World, had detained the Prince almost by force from sharing the fate of his father. But ere those vessels could put out to sea, the vigorous measures of the Saxon King had already intercepted the retreat of the vessels. And then, ranging their shields as a wall round their masts, the bold vikings at least determined to die as men.

But with the morning came King Harold himself to the banks of the river, and behind him, with trailed lances, a solemn procession that bore the body of the Scald King. They halted on the margin, and a boat was launched towards the Norwegian fleet, bearing a monk who demanded the chiefs to send a deputation, headed by the young Prince himself, to receive the corpse of their King, and hear the proposals of the Saxon.

The vikings, who had anticipated no preliminaries to the massacre they awaited, did not hesitate to accept these overtures. Twelve of the most famous chiefs still surviving, and Olave himself, entered the boat; and, standing between his brothers Leofwine and Gurth, Harold thus accosted them—

"Your King invaded a people that had given him no offence: he has paid the forfeit—we war not with the dead! Give to his remains the honors due to the brave. Without ransom or condition, we yield to you what can no longer harm us. And for thee, young Prince," continued the King, with a tone of pity in his voice, as he contemplated the stately boyhood and proud but deep grief in the face of Olave, "for thee, wilt thou not live to learn that the wars of Odin are treason to the Faith of the Cross? We have conquered—we dare not butcher. Take such ships as ye need for those that survive. Three-and-twenty I offer for your transport. Return to your native shores, and guard them as we have guarded ours. Are ye contented?"

Amongst those chiefs was a stern priest—the Bishop of the Orcades—he advanced, and bent his knee to the King.

"O Lord of England," said he, "yesterday thou didst conquer the form—to-day, the soul. And never more may generous Norsemen invade the coast of him who honors the dead and spares the living."

"Amen!" cried the chiefs, and they all knelt to Harold. The young Prince stood a moment irresolute, for his dead father was on the bier before him, and revenge was yet a virtue in the heart of a sea-king. But lifting his eyes to Harold's, the mild and gentle majesty of the Saxon's brow was irresistible in its benign command; and stretching his right hand to the King, he raised on high the other, and said aloud, "Faith and friendship with thee and England evermore."

Then all the chiefs rising, they gathered round the bier, but no hand, in the sight of the conquering foe, lifted the cloth of gold that covered the corpse of the famous King. The bearers of the bier moved on slowly

* The quick succession of events allowed the Saxon army no time to bury the slain; and the bones of the invaders whitened the field of battle for many years afterwards.

towards the boat; the Norwegians followed with measured funereal steps. And not till the bier was placed on board the royal galley was there heard the wail of woe; but then it came loud, and deep, and dismal, and was followed by a burst of wild song from a surviving Scald.

The Norwegian prepartions for departure were soon made, and the ships vouchsafed to their convoy raised anchor, and sailed down the stream. Harold's eye watched the ships from the river banks.

"And there," said he, at last, "there glide the last sails that shall ever bear the devastating raven to the shores of England."

Truly, in that field had been the most signal defeat those warriors, hitherto almost invincible, had known. On that bier lay the last son of Berserker and sea-king; and be it, O Harold, remembered in thine honor, that not by the Norman, but by thee, true-hearted Saxon, was trampled on the English soil the Ravager of the World!*

"So be it," said Haco, "and so, methinks, will it be. But forget not the descendant of the Norsemen, the Count of Rouen!"

Harold started, and turned to his chiefs. "Sound trumpet, and fall in. To York we march. There, re-settle the earldom, collect the spoil, and then back, my men, to the southern shores. Yet first kneel thou, Haco, son of my brother Sweyn: thy deeds were done in the light of Heaven, in the sight of warriors in the open field: so should thine honors find thee! Not with the vain fripperies of Norman knighthood do I deck thee, but make thee one of the elder brotherhood of Minister and Miles. I gird round thy loins mine own baldric of pure silver; I place in thy hand mine own sword of plain steel; and bid thee rise to take place in council and camps amongst the Proceres of England,—Earl of Hertford and Essex. Boy," whispered the King, as he bent over the pale cheek of his nephew, "thank not me. From me the thanks should come. On the day that saw Tostig's crime and his death, thou didst purify the name of my brother Sweyn! On to our city of York!"

* It may be said indeed, that, in the following reign, the Danes under Osbiorn (brother of King Sweyn), sailed up the Humber; but it was to *assist* the English, not to invade them. They were *bought off* by the Norman,—not conquered.

High banquet was held in York; and, according to the customs of the Saxon monarchs, the King could not absent himself from the Victory Feast of his thegns. He sate at the head of the board, between his brothers. Morcar, whose departure from the city had deprived him of a share in the battle, had arrived that day with his brother Edwin, whom he had gone to summon to his aid. And though the young Earls envied the fame they had not shared, the envy was noble.

Gay and boisterous was the wassail; and lively song, long neglected in England, woke, as it wakes ever, at the breath of Joy and Fame. As if in the days of Alfred, the harp passed from hand to hand: martial and rough the strain beneath the touch of the Anglo-Dane, more refined and thoughtful the lay when it chimed to the voice of the Anglo-Saxon. But the memory of Tostig—all guilty though he was—a brother slain in war with a brother, lay heavy on Harold's soul. Still, so had he schooled and trained himself to live but for England—know no joy and no woe not hers—that by degrees and strong efforts he shook off his gloom. And music, and song, and wine, and blazing lights, and the proud sight of those long lines of valiant men, whose hearts had beat and whose hands had triumphed in the same cause, all aided to link his senses with the gladness of the hour.

And now, as night advanced, Leofwine, who was ever a favorite in the banquet, as Gurth in the council, rose to propose the *drink-hæl*, which carries the most characteristic of our modern social customs to an antiquity so remote. And the roar was hushed at the sight of the young Earl's winsome face. With due decorum, he uncovered his head,* composed his countenance, and began—

"Craving forgiveness of my lord the King, and this noble assembly," said Loefwine, "in which are so many from whom what I intend to propose would come with better grace, I would remind you that William, Count of the Normans, meditates a pleasure excursion, of the same nature as our late visitor Harold Hardrada's."

* The Saxons sat at meals with their heads covered.

A scornful laugh ran through the hall.

"And as we English are hospitable folk, and give any man, who asks, meat and board for one night, so one day's welcome, methinks, will be all that the Count of the Normans will need at our English hands."

Flushed with the joyous insolence of wine, the wassailers roared applause.

"Wherefore, this *drink-hæl* to William of Rouen! And, to borrow a saying now in every man's lips, and which, I think, our good scops will take care that our children's children shall learn by heart,—since he covets our Saxon soil, 'seven feet of land' in frank pledge to him for ever!"

"*Drink-hæl* to William the Norman!" shouted the revellers; and each man, with mocking formality, took off his cap, kissed his hand, and bowed.* "*Drink-hæl* to William the Norman!" and the shout rolled from floor to roof—when, in the midst of the uproar, a man all bedabbled with dust and mire, rushed into the hall, rushed through the rows of the banqueters, rushed to the throne-chair of Harold, and cried aloud, "William the Norman is encamped on the shores of Sussex; and with the mightiest armament ever yet seen in England, is ravaging the land far and near!"

* Henry.

BOOK THE TWELFTH.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.

In the heart of the forest land in which Hilda's abode was situated, a gloomy pool reflected upon its stagnant waters the still shadows of the autumnal foliage. As is common in ancient forests in the neighborhood of men's wants, the trees were dwarfed in height by repeated loppings, and the boughs sprang from the hollow, gnarled boles of pollard oaks and beeches; the trunks, vast in girth, and covered with mosses and whitening canker-stains, or wreaths of ivy, spoke of the most remote antiquity; but the boughs which their lingering and mutilated life put forth, were either thin and feeble with innumerable branchlets, or were centred on some solitary distorted limb which the woodman's axe had spared. The trees thus assumed all manner of crooked, deformed, fantastic shapes—all betokening age, and all decay—all, in despite of the noiseless solitude around, proclaiming the waste and ravages of man.

The time was that of the first watches of night, when the autumnal moon was brightest and broadest. You might see, on the opposite side of the pool, the antlers of the deer every now and then moving restlessly above the fern in which thay had made their couch; and, through the nearer glades, the hares and conies stealing forth to sport or to feed; or the bat, wheeling low, in chase of the forest moth. From the thickest part of the copse came a slow human foot, and Hilda, emerging, paused by the waters of the pool. That serene and stony calm habitual to her features was gone; sorrow and passion had seized the soul of the Vala, in the midst of its fancied security from the troubles it presumed to foresee for others. The lines of the face were deep and care-worn—age had come on with rapid strides—and the light of the eye was vague and unsettled, as if the lofty reason shook, terrified in its pride, at last.

"Alone, alone!" she murmured, half aloud: "yea, evermore alone! And the grandchild I had reared to be the mother of kings—whose fate, from the cradle, seemed linked with royalty and love—in whom, watching and hoping for, in whom, loving and heeding, methought I lived again the sweet human life—hath gone from my hearth —forsaken, broken-hearted—withering down to the grave under the shade of the barren cloister? Is mine heart, then, all a lie? Are the gods who led Odin from the Scythian East but the juggling fiends whom the craven Christian abhors? Lo! the Wine Month has come; a few nights more, and the sun which all prophecy foretold should go down on the union of the king and the maid, shall bring round the appointed day: yet Aldyth still lives, and Edith still withers; and War stands side by side with the Church, between the betrothed and the altar. Verily, verily, my spirit hath lost its power, and leaves me bowed, in the awe of night, a feeble, aged, hopeless, childless woman!"

Tears of human weakness rolled down the Vala's cheeks. At that moment, a laugh came from a thing that had seemed like the fallen trunk of a tree, or a trough in which the herdsman waters his cattle, so still, and shapeless, and undefined it had lain amongst the rank weeds and nightshade and trailing creepers on the marge of the pool. The laugh was low yet fearful to hear.

Slowly, the thing moved, and rose, and took the outline of a human form; and the Prophetess beheld the witch whose sleep she had disturbed by the Saxon's grave.

"Where is the banner?" said the witch, laying her hand on Hilda's arm, and looking into her face with bleared and rheumy eyes, "where is the banner thy handmaids were weaving for Harold the Earl? Why didst thou lay aside that labor of love for Harold the King? Hie thee home, and bid thy maidens ply all night at the work; make it potent with rune and with spell, and with gums of the seid. Take the banner to Harold the King as a marriage-gift; for the day of his birth shall be still the day of his nuptials with Edith the Fair!"

Hilda gazed on the hideous form before her; and so had her soul fallen from its arrogant pride of place, that instead of the scorn with which so foul a pretender to the Great Art had before inspired the King-born Prophetess, her veins tingled with credulous awe.

"Art thou a mortal like myself," she said after a pause, "or one of those beings often seen by the shepherd in mist and rain, driving before them their shadowy flocks? one of those of whom no man knoweth whether they are of earth or of Helheim? whether they have ever known the lot and conditions of flesh, or are but some dismal race between body and spirit, hateful alike to gods and to men?"

The dreadful hag shook her head, as if refusing to answer the question, and said,—

"Sit we down, sit we down by the dead dull pool, and if thou wouldst be wise as I am, wake up all thy wrongs, fill thyself with hate, and let thy thoughts be curses. Nothing is strong on earth but the Will; and hate to the will is as the iron in the hands of the war-man."

"Ha!" answered Hilda, "then, thou art indeed one of the loathsome brood whose magic is born, not of the aspiring soul, but the fiendlike heart. And between us there is no union. I am of the race of those whom priests and kings reverenced and honored as the oracles of heaven; and rather let my lore be dimmed and weakened, in admitting the humanities of hope and love, than be lightened by the glare of the wrath that Lok and Rana bear the children of men."

"What, art thou so base and so doting," said the hag, with fierce contempt, "as to know that another has supplanted thine Edith, that all the schemes of thy life are undone, and yet feel no hate for the man who hath wronged her and thee?—the man who had never been king if thou hadst not breathed into him the ambition of rule? Think, and curse!"

"My curse would wither the heart that is entwined within his," answered Hilda; "and," she added abruptly, as if eager to escape from her own impulses, "didst thou not tell me, even now, that the wrong would be redressed, and his betrothed yet be his bride on the appointed day?"

"Ha! home, then!—home! and weave the charmed woof of the banner, broider it with zimmes and with gold worthy the standard of a king: for I tell thee, that where that banner is planted, shall Edith clasp with bridal arms her adored. And the *hwata* thou hast read by the bautastein, and in the temple of the Briton's revengeful gods, shall be fulfilled."

"Dark daughter of Hela," said the Prophetess, "whether demon or god hath inspired thee, I hear in my spirit a voice that tells me thou hast pierced to a truth that my lore could not reach. Thou art houseless and poor; I will give wealth to thine age if thou wilt stand with me by the altar of Thor, and let thy galdra unriddle the secrets that have baffled mine own. All foreshown to me hath ever come to pass, but in a sense other than that in which my soul read the rune and the dream, the leaf and the fount, the star and the Scin-læca. My husband slain in his youth; my daughter maddened with woe; her lord murdered on his hearthstone; Sweyn, whom I loved as my child,"—the Vala paused, contending against her own emotions,—"I loved them all," she faltered, clasping her hands, "for them I tasked the future. The future promised fair; I lured them to their doom, and when the doom came, lo! the promise was kept! but how?—and now, Edith, the last of my race; Harold, the pride of my pride!—speak, thing of Horror and Night, canst thou disentangle the web in which my soul struggles, weak as the fly in the spider's mesh?"

"On the third night from this, will I stand with thee by the altar of Thor, and unriddle the rede of my masters, unknown and unguest, whom thou hadst duteously served. And ere the sun rise, the greatest mystery earth knows shall be bare to thy soul!"

As the witch spoke, a cloud passed over the moon; and before the light broke forth again, the hag had vanished. There was only seen in the dull pool, the water-rat swimming through the rank sedges; only in the forest, the gray wings of the owl, fluttering heavily across the glades; only in the grass, the red eyes of the bloated toad.

Then Hilda went slowly home, and the maids worked all night at the charmed banner. All that night, too, the watch-dogs howled in the yard, through the ruined peristyle—howled in rage and in fear. And under the lattice of the room in which the maids broidered the banner, and the Prophetess muttered her charm, there couched, muttering also, a dark, shapeless thing, at which those dogs howled in rage and in fear.

CHAPTER II.

All within the palace of Westminster showed the confusion and dismay of the awful time;—all, at least, save the council chamber, in which Harold, who had arrived the night before, conferred with his thegns. It was evening: the courtyards and the halls were filled with armed men, and almost with every hour came rider and bode from the Sussex shores. In the corridors the Churchmen grouped and whispered, as they had whispered and grouped in the day of King Edward's death. Stigand passed among them, pale and thoughtful. The serge gowns came rustling round the Archprelate for counsel or courage.

"Shall we go forth with the King's army?" asked a young monk, bolder than the rest, "to animate the host with prayer and hymn?"

"Fool!" said the miserly prelate, "fool! if we do so, and the Norman conquer, what become of our abbacies and convent lands? The Duke wars against Harold, not England. If he slay Harold——"

"What then?"

"The Atheling is left us yet. Stay we here and guard the last prince of the House of Cerdic," whispered Stigand, and he swept on.

In the chamber in which Edward had breathed his last, his widowed Queen, with Aldyth her successor, and Githa and some other ladies, waited the decision of the council. By one of the windows stood, clasping each other by the hand, the fair young bride of Gurth, and the betrothed of the gay Leofwine. Githa sate alone, bowing her face over her hands—desolate; mourning for the fate of her traitor son; and the wounds, that the recent and holier death of Thyra had inflicted, bled afresh. And the holy lady of Edward attempted in vain, by pious adjurations, to comfort Aldyth, who, scarcely heeding her, started ever and anon with impatient terror, muttering to herself, "Shall I lose *this* crown too?"

In the council-hall debate waxed warm,—which was the wiser, to meet William at once in the battle-field, or to delay, till all the forces Harold might expect (and which he had ordered to be levied, in his rapid march from York), could swell his host?

"If we retire before the enemy," said Gurth, "leaving him in a strange land, winter approaching, his forage will fail. He will scarce dare to march upon London: if he does, we shall be better prepared to encounter him. My voice is against resting all on a single battle."

"Is that thy choice?" said Vebba, indignantly. "Not so, I am sure, would have chosen thy father; not so think the Saxons of Kent. The Norman is laying waste all the lands of thy subjects, Lord Harold; living on plunder, as a robber, in the realm of King Alfred. Dost thou think that men will get better heart to fight for their country by hearing that their King shrinks from the danger?"

"Thou speakest well and wisely," said Haco; and all eyes turned to the young son of Sweyn, as to one who best knew the character of the hostile army and the skill of its chief. "We have now with us a force flushed with conquest over a foe hitherto deemed invincible. Men who have conquered the Norwegian will not shrink from the Nor-

man. Victory depends upon ardor more than numbers. Every hour of delay damps the ardor. Are we sure that it will swell the numbers? What I dread most is not the sword of the Norman Duke, it is his craft. Rely upon it, that if we meet him not soon, he will march straight to London. He will proclaim by the way, that he comes not to seize the throne, but to punish Harold, and abide by the Witan, or perchance by the word of the Roman pontiff. The terror of his armament unresisted, will spread like a panic through the land. Many will be decoyed by his false pretexts, many awed by a force that the King dare not meet. If he come in sight of the city, think you that merchants and cheapmen will not be daunted by the thought of pillage and sack? They will be the first to capitulate at the first house which is fired. The city is weak to guard against siege; its walls long neglected; and in sieges the Normans are famous. Are we so united (the King's rule thus fresh), but what no cabals, no dissensions will break out amongst ourselves? If the Duke come, as come he will, in the name of the Church, may not the Churchmen set up some new pretender to the crown—perchance the child Edgar? And, divided against ourselves, how ingloriously should we fall! Besides, this land, though never before have the links between province and province been drawn so close, hath yet demarcations, that make the people selfish. The Northumbrians, I fear, will not stir to aid London, and Mercia will hold aloof from our peril. Grant that William once seize London, all England is broken up and dispirited; each shire, nay, each town looking only to itself. Talk of delay as wearing out the strength of the foe! No, it would wear out our own. Little eno', I fear, is yet left in our treasury. If William seize London, that treasury is his, with all the wealth of our burgesses. How should we maintain an army, except by preying on the people, and thus discontenting them? Where guard that army? Where are our forts? where our mountains? The war of delay suits only a land of rock and defile, or of castle and breast-work. Thegns and warriors, ye have no castles but your breasts of mail. Abandon these, and you are lost."

A general murmur of applause closed this speech of Haco, which, while wise in arguments our historians have overlooked, came home to that noblest reason of brave men, which urges prompt resistance to foul invasion.

Up, then, rose King Harold.

"I thank you, fellow-Englishmen, for that applause with which ye have greeted mine own thoughts on the lips of Haco. Shall it be said that your King rushed to chase his own brother from the soil of outraged England, yet shrunk from the sword of the Norman stranger? Well indeed might my brave subjects desert my banner if it floated idly over these palace walls, while the armed invader pitched his camp in the heart of England. By delay, William's force, whatever it might be, cannot grow less; his cause grows more strong in our craven fears. What his armament may be, we rightly know not; the report varies with every messenger, swelling and lessening with the rumors of every hour. Have we not around us now our most stalwart veterans—the flower of our armies—the most eager spirits—the vanquishers of Hardrada? Thou sayest, Gurth, that all should not be perilled on a single battle. True. Harold should be perilled, but wherefore England? Grant that we win the day; the quicker our despatch, the greater our fame, the more lasting that peace at home and abroad, which rests ever its best foundation on the sense of the power, which wrong cannot provoke, unchastised. Grant that we lose; a loss can be made gain by a king's brave death. Why should not our example rouse and unite all who survive us? Which the nobler example, the one best fitted to protect our country—the recreant backs of living chiefs, or the glorious dead with their fronts to the foe? Come what may, life or death, at least we will thin the Norman numbers, and heap the barriers of our corpses on the Norman march. At least, we can show to the rest of England how men should defend their native land! And if, as I believe and pray, in every English breast beats a heart like Harold's, what matters though a king should fall?—Freedom is immortal."

He spoke; and forth from his baldric he drew his sword. Every blade, at that signal, leapt from the sheath: and in that council-

hall at least, in every breast beat the heart of Harold.

CHAPTER III.

THE chiefs dispersed to array their troops for the morrow's march; but Harold and his kinsmen entered the chamber where the women waited the decision of the council, for that, in truth, was to them the parting interview. The King had resolved, after completing all his martial preparations, to pass the night in the Abbey of Waltham; and his brothers lodged, with the troops they commanded, in the city or its suburbs. Haco alone remained with that portion of the army quartered in and around the palace.

They entered the chamber, and in a moment each heart had sought its mate; in the mixed assembly each only conscious of the other. There, Gurth bowed his noble head over the weeping face of the young bride that for the last time nestled to his bosom. There, with a smiling lip, but tremulous voice, the gay Leofwine soothed and chided in a breath the maiden he had wooed as the partner for a life that his mirthful spirit made one holiday; snatching kisses from a cheek no longer coy.

But cold was the kiss which Harold pressed on the brow of Aldyth; and with something of disdain, and of bitter remembrance of a nobler love, he comforted a terror which sprang from the thought of self.

"Oh, Harold!" sobbed Aldyth, "be not rashly brave: guard thy life for my sake. Without thee, what am I? Is it even safe for me to rest here? Were it not better to fly to York, or seek refuge with Malcolm the Scot?"

"Within three days at the farthest," answered Harold, "thy brothers will be in London. Abide by their counsel; act as they advise at the news of my victory or my fall."

He paused abruptly, for he heard close beside him the broken voice of Gurth's bride, in answer to her lord.

"Think not of me, beloved; thy whole heart now be England's. And if—if"—her voice failed a moment, but resumed proudly, "why even then thy wife is safe, for she survives not her lord and her land!"

The King left his wife's side, and kissed his brother's bride.

"Noble heart!" he said; "with women like thee for our wives and mothers, England could survive the slaughter of a thousand kings."

He turned, and knelt to Githa. She threw her arms over his broad breast, and wept bitterly.

"Say—say, Harold, that I have not reproached thee for Tostig's death. I have obeyed the last commands of Godwin my lord. I have deemed thee ever right and just; now let me not lose thee, too. They go with thee, all my surviving sons, save the exile Wolnoth,—him whom now I shall never behold again. Oh, Harold!—let not mine old age be childless!"

"Mother,—dear, dear mother, with these arms round my neck I take new life and new heart. No! never hast thou reproached me for my brother's death—never for aught which man's first duty enjoined. Murmur not that that duty commands us still. We are the sons, through thee, of royal heroes; through my father, of Saxon freemen. Rejoice that thou hast three sons left, whose arms thou mayest pray God and his saints to prosper, and over whose graves, if they fall, thou shalt shed no tears of shame!"

Then the widow of King Edward, who, (the crucifix clasped in her hands,) had listened to Harold with lips apart and marble cheeks, could keep down no longer her human, woman's heart; she rushed to Harold as he still knelt to Githa—knelt by his side, and clasped him in her arms with despairing fondness:—

"O brother, brother, whom I have so dearly loved, when all other love seemed forbidden me;—when he who gave me a throne refused me his heart, when, looking at thy fair promise, listening to thy tender comfort,—when, remembering the days of old, in which thou wert my docile pupil, and we dreamed bright dreams together of happiness and fame to come,—when, loving thee methought too well, too much as weak mothers may love a mortal son, I prayed God to detach my heart from earth;—Oh, Harold! now forgive me all my coldness. I shudder at thy re-

solve. I dread that thou should meet this man, whom an oath hath bound thee to obey. Nay, frown not—I bow to thy will, my brother and my King. I know that thou hast chosen as thy conscience sanctions, as thy duty ordains. But come back—Oh, come back — thou who, like me" (her voice whispered), "hast sacrificed the household hearth to thy country's altars,—and I will never pray to heaven to love thee less—my brother, oh my brother!"

In all the room were then heard but the low sounds of sobs and broken exclamations. All clustered to one spot—Leofwine and his betrothed—Gurth and his bride—even the selfish Aldyth, ennobled by the contagion of the sublime emotion,—all clustered round Githa the mother of the three guardians of the fated land, and all knelt before her, by the side of Harold. Suddenly, the widowed Queen, the virgin wife of the last heir of Cerdic, rose, and holding on high the sacred rood over those bended heads, said, with devout passion,—

"O Lord of Hosts—We Children of Doubt and Time, trembling in the dark, dare not take to ourselves to question thine unerring will. Sorrow and death, as joy and life, are at the breath of a mercy divine, and a wisdom all-seeing: and out of the hours of evil thou drawest, in mystic circle, the eternity of Good. 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' If, O Disposer of events, our human prayers are not adverse to thy pre-judged decrees, protect these lives, the bulwarks of our homes and altars, sons whom the land offers as a sacrifice. May thine angel turn aside the blade—as of old from the heart of Isaac! But if, O Ruler of Nations, in whose sight the ages are as moments, and generations but as sands in the sea, these lives are doomed, may the death expiate their sins, and, shrived on the battle-field, absolve and receive the souls!"

CHAPTER IV.

By the altar of the Abbey Church of Waltham, that night, knelt Edith in prayer for Harold.

She had taken up her abode in a small convent of nuns that adjoined the more famous monastery of Waltham; but she had promised Hilda not to enter on the novitiate, until the birthday of Harold had passed. She herself had no longer faith in the omens and prophecies that had deceived her youth and darkened her life; and, in the more congenial air of our Holy Church, the spirit, ever so chastened, grew calm and resigned. But the tidings of the Norman's coming, and the King's victorious return to his capital, had reached even that still retreat; and love, which had blent itself with religion, led her steps to that lonely altar. And suddenly, as she there knelt, only lighted by the moon through the high casements, she was startled by the sound of approaching feet and murmuring voices. She rose in alarm—the door of the Church was thrown open—torches advanced—and amongst the monks, between Osgood and Ailred, came the King. He had come, that last night before his march, to invoke the prayers of that pious brotherhood; and by the altar he had founded, to pray, himself, that his one sin of faith forfeited and oath abjured, might not palsy his arm and weigh on his soul in the hour of his country's need.

Edith stifled the cry that rose to her lips, as the torches fell on the pale and hushed and melancholy face of Harold; and she crept away under the arch of the vast Saxon columns, and into the shade of abutting walls. The monks and the King, intent on their holy office, beheld not that solitary and shrinking form. They approached the altar; and there the King knelt down lowlily, and none heard the prayer. But as Osgood held the sacred rood over the bended head of the royal suppliant, the Image on the crucifix (which had been a gift from Alred the prelate, and was supposed to have belonged of old to Augustine, the first founder of the Saxon Church—so that, by the superstition of the age, it was invested with miraculous virtues)—bowed itself visibly. Visibly, the pale and ghastly image of the suffering God bowed over the head of the kneeling man; whether the fastenings of the rood were loosened, or from what cause soever,—in the eyes of all the brotherhood, the Image bowed." *

* Palgrave—"Hist. of Anglo-Saxons."

A thrill of terror froze every heart, save Edith's, too remote to perceive the portent, and save the King's, whom the omen seemed to doom, for his face was buried in his clasped hands. Heavy was his heart, nor needed it other warnings than its own gloom.

Long and silently prayed the King; and when at last he rose, and the monks, though with altered and tremulous voices, began their closing hymn, Edith passed noiselessly along the wall, and, stealing through one of the smaller doors which communicated to the nunnery annexed, gained the solitude of her own chamber. There she stood, benumbed with the strength of her emotions at the sight of Harold thus abruptly presented. How had the fond human heart leapt to meet him! Twice, thus, in the august ceremonials of Religion, secret, shrinking, unwitnessed, had she, his betrothed, she, the partner of his soul, stood aloof to behold him. She had seen him in the hour of his pomp, the crown upon his brow,—seen him in the hour of his peril and agony, that anointed head bowed to the earth. And in the pomp that she could not share, she had exulted; but, oh, now—now,—Oh now that she could have knelt beside that humbled form, and prayed with that voiceless prayer!

The torches flashed in the court below; the church was again deserted; the monks passed in mute procession back to their cloister; but a single man paused, turned aside, and stopped at the gate of the humbler convent: a knocking was heard at the great oaken door, and the watch-dog barked. Edith started, pressed her hand on her heart and trembled. Steps approached her door—and the Abbess, entering, summoned her below, to hear the farewell greeting of her cousin the King.

Harold stood in the simple hall of the cloister: a single taper, tall and wan, burned on the oak board. The Abbess led Edith by the hand, and, at a sign from the King, withdrew. So, once more upon earth, the betrothed and divided were alone.

"Edith," said the King, in a voice in which no ear but hers could have detected the struggle, "do not think I have come to disturb thy holy calm, or sinfully revive the memories of the irrevocable past: where once on my breast, in the old fashion of our fathers, I wrote thy name, is written now the name of the mistress that supplants thee. Into Eternity melts the Past; but I could not depart to a field from which there is no retreat—in which, against odds that men say are fearful, I have resolved to set my crown and my life—without once more beholding thee, pure guardian of my happier days! Thy forgiveness for all the sorrow that, in the darkness which surrounds man's hopes and dreams, I have brought on thee (dread return for love so enduring, so generous and divine!)—thy forgiveness I will not ask. Thou alone perhaps on earth knowest the soul of Harold; and if he hath wronged thee, thou seest alike in the wronger and the wronged, but the children of iron Duty, the servants of imperial Heaven. Not thy forgiveness I ask—but—but—Edith, holy maid! angel soul!—thy—thy blessing!" His voice faltered, and he inclined his lofty head as to a saint.

"Oh that I had the power to bless!" exclaimed Edith, mastering her rush of tears with a heroic effort; "and methinks I have the power—not from virtues of my own, but from all that I owe to thee! The grateful have the power to bless. For what do I not owe to thee—owe to that very love of which even the grief is sacred? Poor child in the house of the heathen, thy love descended upon me, and in it, the smile of God! In that love my spirit awoke, and was baptized: every thought that has risen from earth, and lost itself in heaven, was breathed into my heart by thee! Thy creature and thy slave, hadst thou tempted me to sin, sin had seemed hallowed by thy voice; but thou saidst, 'True love is virtue,' and so I worshipped virtue in loving thee. Strengthened, purified, by thy bright companionship, from thee came the strength to resign thee—from thee the refuge under the wings of God—from thee the firm assurance that our union yet shall be—not as our poor Hilda dreams, on the perishable earth,—but there! oh, there! yonder, by the celestial altars, in the land in which all spirits are filled with love. Yes, soul of Harold! there are might and holiness in the blessing the soul thou hast redeemed and reared sheds on thee!"

And so beautiful, so unlike the Beautiful of the common earth, looked the maid as

she thus spoke, and laid hands, trembling with no human passion, on that royal head—that could a soul from paradise be made visible, such might be the shape it would wear to a mortal's eye! Thus, for some moments both were silent; and in the silence the gloom vanished from the heart of Harold, and, through a deep and sublime serenity, it rose undaunted to front the future.

No embrace—no farewell kiss—profaned the parting of those pure and noble spirits—parting on the threshold of the grave. It was only the spirit that clasped the spirit, looking forth from the clay into measureless eternity. Not till the air of night came once more on his brow, and the moonlight rested on the roofs and fanes of the land entrusted to his charge, was the man once more the human hero; not till she was alone in her desolate chamber, and the terrors of the coming battle-field chased the angel from her thoughts, was the maid inspired, once more the weeping woman.

A little after sunrise the Abbess, who was distantly akin to the house of Godwin, sought Edith, so agitated by her own fear, that she did not remark the trouble of her visitor. The supposed miracle of the sacred Image bowing over the kneeling King, had spread dismay through the clositers of both nunnery and abbey; and so intense was the disquietude of the two brothers, Osgood and Ailred, in the simple and grateful affection they bore their royal benefactor, that they had obeyed the impulse of their tender, credulous hearts, and left the monastery with the dawn, intending to follow the king's march,* and watch and pray near the awful battle-field. Edith listened, and made no reply; the terrors of the Abbess infected her; the example of the two monks woke the sole thought which stirred through the nightmare-dream that suspended reason itself; and when, at noon, the Abbess again sought the chamber, Edith was gone;—gone, and alone—none knew wherefore—none guessed whither.

All the pomp of the English army burst upon Harold's view, as, in the rising sun, he approached the bridge of the capital. Over that bridge came the stately march,—battle-axe and spear and banner, glittering in the ray. And as he drew aside, and the forces defiled before him, the cry of "God save King Harold!" rose with loud acclaim and lusty joy, borne over the waves of the river, startling the echoes in the ruined keape of the Roman, heard in the halls restored by Canute, and chiming, like a chorus, with the chaunts of the monks by the tomb of Sebba, in St. Paul's,—by the tomb of Edward at St. Peter's.

With a brightened face, and a kindling eye, the King saluted his lines, and then fell into the ranks towards the rear, where, among the burghers of London and the lithsmen of Middlesex, the immemorial custom of Saxon monarchs placed the kingly banner. And, looking up, he beheld, not his old standard with the Tiger heads and the Cross, but a banner both strange and gorgeous. On a field of gold was the effigies of a Fighting Warrior; and the arms were bedecked in orient pearls, and the borders blazed in the rising sun, with ruby, amethyst, and emerald. While he gazed, wondering, on this dazzling ensign, Haco, who rode beside the standard-bearer, advanced, and gave him a letter.

"Last night," said he, "after thou hadst left the palace, many recruits, chiefly from Hertfordshire and Essex, came in; but the most gallant and stalwart of all, in arms and in stature, were the lithsmen of Hilda. With them came this banner, on which she has lavished the gems that have passed to her hand through long lines of northern ancestors, from Odin, the founder of all northern thrones. So, at least, said the bode of our kinswoman."

Harold had already cut the silk round the letter, and was reading its contents. They ran thus:—

"King of England, I forgive thee the broken heart of my grandchild. They whom the land feeds, should defend the land. I send to thee, in tribute, the best fruits that grow in the field and the forest, round the house which my husband took from the bounty of Canute;—stout hearts and strong hands! Descending alike, as do Hilda and Harold (through Githa thy mother), from the Warrior God of the North, whose race never shall fail—take, O defender of the Saxon children of Odin, the banner I have

* Palgrave—"Hist. of Anglo-Saxons."

broidered with the gems that the Chief of the Asas bore from the East. Firm as love be thy foot, strong as death be thy hand, under the shade which the banner of Hilda, —under the gleam which the jewels of Odin, —cast on the brows of the King! So Hilda, the daughter of monarchs, greets Harold the leader of men."

Harold looked up from the letter, and Haco resumed:—

"Thou canst guess not the cheering effect which this banner, supposed to be charmed, and which the name of Odin alone would suffice to make holy, at least with thy fierce Anglo-Danes, hath already produced through the army."

"It is well, Haco," said Harold, with a smile. "Let priest add his blessing to Hilda's charm, and Heaven will pardon any magic that makes more brave the hearts that defend its altars. Now fall we back, for the army must pass beside the hill with the crommell and gravestone; there, be sure, Hilda will be at watch for our march, and we will linger a few moments to thank her somewhat for her banner, yet more justly, methinks, for her men. Are not yon stout fellows all in mail, so tall and so orderly, in advance of the London burghers, Hilda's aid to our Fyrd?"

"They are," answered Haco.

The King backed his steed to accost them with his kingly greeting; and then, with Haco, falling yet farther to the rear, seemed engaged in inspecting the numerous wains, bearing missiles and forage, that always accompanied the march of a Saxon army, and served to strengthen its encampment. But when they came in sight of the hillock by which the great body of the army had preceded them, the king and the son of Sweyn dismounted, and on foot entered the large circle of the Celtic ruin.

By the side of the Teuton altar they beheld two forms, both perfectly motionless: but one was extended on the ground as in sleep or in death; the other sate beside it, as if watching the corpse, or guarding the slumber. The face of the last was not visible, propped upon the arms which rested on the knees, and hidden by the hands. But in the face of the other, as the two men drew near, they recognized the Danish prophetess. Death in its dreadest characters was written on that ghastly face; woe and terror, beyond all words to describe, spoke in the haggard brow, the distorted lips, and the wild glazed stare of the open eyes. At the startled cry of the intruders on that dreary silence, the living form moved; and though still leaning its face on its hands, it raised its head; and never countenance of Northern Vampire, cowering by the rifled grave, was more fiend-like and appalling.

"Who and what art thou?" said the King; "and how, thus unhonored in the air of heaven, lies the corpse of the noble Hilda? Is this the hand of Nature? Haco, Haco, so look the eyes, so set the features, of those whom the horror of ruthless murder slays even before the steel strikes. Speak, hag, art thou dumb?"

"Search the body," answered the witch, "there is no wound! Look to the throat,— no mark of the deadly gripe! I have seen such in my day. There are none on this corpse, I trow; yet thou sayest rightly, horror slew her! Ha, ha! she would know, and she hath known; she would raise the dead and the demon; she hath raised them; she would read the riddle,—she hath read it. Pale King and dark youth, would ye learn what Hilda saw, eh? eh? Ask her in the Shadow-World where she awaits ye! Ha! ye too would be wise in the future; ye too would climb to heaven through the mysteries of hell. Worms! worms! crawl back to the clay—to the earth! One such night as the hag ye despise enjoys as her sport and her glee, would freeze your veins, and sear the life in your eyeballs, and leave your corpses to terror and wonder, like the carcase that lies at your feet!"

"Ho!" cried the King stamping his foot. "Hence, Haco; rouse the household; summon hither the hand-maids; call henchman and ceorl to guard this foul raven."

Haco obeyed; but when he returned with the shuddering and amazed attendants, the witch was gone, and the King was leaning against the altar with downcast eyes, and a face troubled and dark with thought.

The body of the Vala was borne into the house; and the King, waking from his reverie, bade them send for the priests, and ordered masses for the parted soul. Then kneeling, with pious hand he closed the eyes and

smoothed the features, and left his mournful kiss on the icy brow. These offices fulfilled, he took Haco's arm, and leaning on it, returned to the spot on which they had left their steeds. Not evincing surprise or awe,—emotions that seemed unknown to his gloomy, settled, impassible nature—Haco said calmly, as they descended the knoll,—

"What evil did the hag predict to thee?"

"Haco," answered the King, "yonder by the shores of Sussex, lies all the future which our eyes now should scan, and our hearts should be firm to meet. These omens and apparitions are but the ghosts of a dead Religion; spectres sent from the grave of the fearful Heathenesse; they may appal but to lure us from our duty. Lo, as we gaze around—the ruins of all the creeds that have made the hearts of men quake with unsubstantial awe—lo, the temple of the Briton!—lo, the fane of the Roman!—lo, the mouldering altar of our ancestral Thor! Ages past lie wrecked around us in these shattered symbols. A new age hath risen, and a new creed. Keep we to the broad truths before us; duty here; knowledge comes alone in the Hereafter."

"That Hereafter!—is it not near?" murmured Haco.

They mounted in silence; and ere they regained the army, paused, by a common impulse, and looked behind. Awful in their desolation rose the temple and the altar! And in Hilda's mysterious death it seemed that their last and lingering Genius,—the Genius of the dark and fierce, the warlike and the wizard North, had expired for ever. Yet, on the outskirt of the forest, dusk and shapeless, that witch without a name stood in the shadow, pointing towards them, with outstretched arm, in vague and denouncing menace;—as if, come what may, all change of creed,—be the faith ever so simple, the truth ever so bright and clear,—there *is* a SUPERSTITION native to that Border-land between the Visible and the Unseen, which will find its priest and its votaries, till the full and crowning splendor of Heaven shall melt every shadow from the world!

CHAPTER V.

ON the broad plain between Pevensey and Hastings, Duke William had arrayed his armaments. In the rear he had built a castle of wood, all the framework of which he had brought with him, and which was to serve as a refuge in case of retreat. His ships he had run into deep water, and scuttled; so that the thought of return, without victory, might be banished from his miscellaneous and multitudinous force. His outposts stretched for miles, keeping watch night and day against surprise. The ground chosen was adapted for all the manœuvres of a cavalry never before paralleled in England, nor perhaps in the world,—almost every horseman a knight, almost every knight fit to be a chief. And on this space William reviewed his army, and there planned and schemed, rehearsed and re-formed, all the stratagems the great day might call forth. But most careful, and laborious, and minute, was he in the manœuvre of a feigned retreat. Not, ere the acting of some modern play, does the anxious manager more elaborately marshal each man, each look, each gesture, that are to form a picture on which the curtain shall fall amidst deafening plaudits, than did the laborious captain appoint each man, and each movement, in his lure to a valiant foe:—The attack of the foot, their recoil, their affected panic, their broken exclamations of despair;—their retreat, first partial and reluctant, next seemingly hurried and complete,—flying, but in flight *carefully* confused:—then the settled watchword, the lightning rally, the rush of the cavalry from the ambush; the sweep and hem round the pursuing foe, the detachment of levelled spears to cut off the Saxon return to the main force, and the lost ground,—were all directed by the most consummate mastership in the stage play, or *upokrisis*, of war, and seized by the adroitness of practised veterans.

Not now, O Harold! hast thou to contend against the rude heroes of the Norse, with their ancestral strategy unimproved! The Civilization of Battle meets thee now!—and all the craft of the Roman guides the manhood of the North.

It was in the midst of such lessons to his foot

and his horseman—spears gleaming—pennons tossing—lines reforming—steeds backing, wheeling, flying, circling—that William's eye blazed, and his deep voice thundered the thrilling word; when Mallet de Graville, who was in command at one of the outposts, rode up to him at full speed, and said in gasps, as he drew breath,—

"King Harold and his army are advancing furiously. Their object is clearly to come on us unawares."

"Hold!" said the Duke, lifting his hand; and the knights around him halted in their perfect discipline; then after a few brief but distinct orders to Odo, Fitzosborne, and some other of his leading chiefs, he headed a numerous cavalcade of his knights, and rode fast to the outpost which Mallet had left,—to catch sight of the coming foe.

The horsemen cleared the plain—passed through a wood, mournfully fading into autumnal hues—and, on emerging, they saw the gleam of the Saxon spears rising on the brows of the gentle hills beyond. But even the time, short as it was, that had sufficed to bring William in view of the enemy, had sufficed also, under the orders of his generals, to give to the wide plain of his encampment all the order of a host prepared. And William, having now mounted on a rising ground, turned from the spears on the hill tops, to his own fast forming lines on the plain, and said with a stern smile,—

"Methinks the Saxon usurper, if he be among those on the height of yon hills, will vouchsafe us time to breathe! St. Michael gives his crown to our hands, and his corpse to the crow, if he dare to descend."

And so indeed, as the Duke with a soldier's eye foresaw from a soldier's skill, so it proved. The spears rested on the summits. It soon became evident that the English general perceived that here there was no Hardrada to surprise; that the news brought to his ear had exaggerated neither the numbers, nor the arms, nor the discipline of the Norman; and that the battle was not to the bold, but to the wary.

"He doth right," said William, musingly; "nor think, O my Quens, that we shall find a fool's hot brain under Harold's helmet of iron. How is this broken ground of hillock and valley named in our chart? It is strange that we should have overlooked its strength, and suffered it thus to fall into the hands of the foe. How is it named? Can any of ye remember?"

"A Saxon peasant," said De Graville, "told me that the ground was called Senlac* or Sanglac, or some such name, in their musicless jargon."

"Grammercy!" quoth Grantmesnil, "methinks the name will be familiar eno' hereafter; no jargon seemeth the sound to my ear—a significant name, and ominous—Sanglac, Sanguelac—the Lake of Blood."

"Sanguelac!" said the Duke, startled; "where have I heard that name before? it must have been between sleeping and waking.—Sanguelac, Sanguelac!—truly sayest thou, through a lake of blood we must wade indeed!"

"Yet," said De Graville, "thine astrologer foretold that thou wouldst win the realm without a battle."

"Poor astrologer!" said William, "the ship he sailed in was lost. Ass indeed is he who pretends to warn others, nor sees an inch before his eyes what his own fate will be! Battle shall we have, but not yet. Hark thee, Guillaume, thou hast been guest with this usurper; thou hast seemed to me to have some love for him—a love natural since thou didst once fight by his side; wilt thou go from me to the Saxon host with Hugues Maigrot, the monk, and back the message I shall send?"

The proud and punctilious Norman thrice crossed himself ere he answered.—

"There was a time, Count William, when I should have deemed it honor to hold parle with Harold the brave Earl; but now, with the crown on his head, I hold it shame and disgrace to barter words with a knight unleal and a man foresworn."

"Nathless, thou shalt do me this favor," said William, "for" (and he took the knight somewhat aside) "I cannot disguise from thee that I look anxiously on the chance of battle. Yon men are flushed with new triumph over the greatest warrior Norway ever knew, they will fight on their own soil, and under a chief whom I have studied and

* The battle-field of Hastings seems to have been called Senlac, before the Conquest, Sanguelac after it.

read with more care than the Comments of Cæsar, and in whom the guilt of perjury cannot blind me to the wit of a great general. If we can yet get our end without battle, large shall be my thanks to thee, and I will hold thine astrologer a man wise, though unhappy."

"Certes," said De Graville gravely, "it were discourteous to the memory of the star-seer, not to make some effort to prove his science a just one. And the Chaldeans——"

"Plague seize the Chaldeans!" muttered the Duke. "Ride with me back to the camp, that I may give thee my message, and instruct also the monk."

"De Graville," resumed the Duke, as they rode towards the lines, "my meaning is briefly this. I do not think that Harold will accept my offers and resign his crown, but I design to spread dismay, and perhaps revolt, amongst his captains; I wish that they may know that the Church lays its Curse on those who fight against my consecrated banner. I do not ask thee, therefore, to demean thy knighthood, by seeking to cajole the usurper; no, but rather boldly to denounce his perjury, and startle his liegemen. Perchance they may compel him to terms—perchance they may desert his banner; at the worst they shall be daunted with full sense of the guilt of his cause."

"Ha, now I comprehend thee, noble Count; and trust me I will speak as Norman and knight should speak."

Meanwhile, Harold, seeing the utter hopelessness of all sudden assault, had seized a general's advantage of the ground he had gained. Occupying the line of hills, he began forthwith to entrench himself behind deep ditches and artful palisades. It is impossible now to stand on that spot, without recognizing the military skill with which the Saxon had taken his post, and formed his precautions. He surrounded the main body of his troops with a perfect breastwork against the charge of the horse. Stakes and strong hurdles, interwoven with osier plaits, and protected by deep dykes, served at once to neutralize the effect of that arm in which William was most powerful, and in which Harold almost entirely failed; while the possession of the ground must compel the foe to march, and to charge, up hill, against all the missiles which the Saxons could pour down from their entrenchments.

Aiding, animating, cheering, directing all, while the dykes were fast hollowed, and the breastworks fast rose, the King of England rode his palfrey from line to line, and work to work, when, looking up, he saw Haco leading towards him, up the slopes, a monk, and a warrior whom, by the banderol on his spear, and the cross on his shield, he knew to be one of the Norman knighthood.

At that moment, Gurth and Leofwine, and those thegns who commanded counties, were thronging round their chief for instructions. The King dismounted, and beckoning them to follow, strode towards the spot on which had just been planted his royal standard. There halting, he said with a grave smile,—

"I perceive that the Norman Count hath sent us his bodes; it is meet that with me, you, the defenders of England, should hear what the Norman saith."

"If he saith aught but prayer for his men to return to Rouen,—needless his message, and short our answer," said Vebba, the bluff thegn of Kent.

Meanwhile the monk and the Norman knight drew near, and paused at some short distance, while Haco, advancing, said briefly,—

"These men I found at our outpost; they demand to speak with the King."

"Under his standard the King will hear the Norman invader," replied Harold; "bid them speak."

The same sallow, mournful, ominous countenance, which Harold had before seen in the halls of Westminster, rising deathlike above the serge garb of the Benedict of Caen, now presented itself, and the monk thus spoke,—

"In the name of William, Duke of the Normans in the field, Count of Rouen in the hall, Claimant of all the realms of Anglia, Scotland, and the Walloons, held under Edward his cousin, I come to thee, Harold his liege and Earl."

"Change thy titles, or depart," said Harold, fiercely, his brow no longer mild in its majesty, but dark as midnight. "What says William the Count of the Foreigners, to

Harold, King of the Angles, and Basileus of Britain?"

"Protesting against thy assumption, I answer thee thus," said Hugues Maigrot. "First, again he offers thee all Northumbria, up to the realm of the Scottish sub-king, if thou wilt fulfil thy vow and cede him the crown."

"Already have I answered,—the crown is not mine to give; and my people stand round me in arms to defend the king of their choice. What next?"

"Next, offers William to withdraw his troops from the land, if thou and thy council and chiefs, will submit to the arbitrement of our most holy Pontiff, Alexander the Second, and abide by his decision whether thou or my liege have the best right to the throne."

"This, as Churchman," said the Abbot of the great Convent of Peterboro', (who, with the Abbot of Hide, had joined the march of Harold, deeming as one the cause of altar and throne,) "this, as Churchman, may *I* take leave to answer. Never yet hath it been heard in England, that the spiritual suzerain of Rome should give us our kings."

"And," said Harold, with a bitter smile, "the Pope hath already summoned me to this trial, as if the laws of England were kept in the rolls of the Vatican! Already, if rightly informed, the Pope hath been pleased to decide that our Saxon land is the Norman's. I reject a judge without a right to decide; and I mock at a sentence that profanes heaven in its insult to men. Is this all?"

"One last offer yet remains," replied the monk sternly. "This knight shall deliver its import. But ere I depart, and thou and thine are rendered up to Vengeance Divine, I speak the words of a mightier chief than William of Rouen. Thus saith his Holiness with whom rests the power to bind and to loose, to bless and to curse:—'Harold, the Perjurer, thou art accursed! On thee and on all who lift hand in thy cause, rests the interdict of the Church. Thou art excommunicated from the family of Christ. On thy land, with its peers and its people, yea, to the beast in the field and the bird in the air, to the seed as the sower, the harvest as the reaper, rests God's anathema! The bull of the Vatican is in the tent of the Norman, the gonfanon of St. Peter hallows yon armies to the service of Heaven. March on, then: ye march as the Assyrian; and the angel of the Lord awaits ye on the way!"

At these words, which for the first time apprised the English leaders that their kingdom and king were under the awful ban of excommunication, the thegns and abbots gazed on each other aghast. A visible shudder passed over the whole warlike conclave, save only three, Harold, and Gurth, and Haco.

The King himself was so moved by indignation at the insolence of the monk and by scorn at the fulmen, which, resting not alone on his own head, presumed to blast the liberties of a nation, that he strode towards the speaker, and it is even said of him by the Norman chroniclers, that he raised his hand as if to strike the denouncer to the earth.

But Gurth interposed, and with his clear eye serenely shining with virtuous passion, he stood betwixt monk and king.

"O thou," he exclaimed, "with the words of religion on thy lips, and the devices of fraud in thy heart, hide thy front in thy cowl, and slink back to thy master. Heard ye not, thegns and abbots, heard ye not this bad, false man offer, as if for peace, and as with the desire of justice, that the Pope should arbitrate between your King and the Norman? yet all the while the monk knew that the Pope had already predetermined the cause; and had ye fallen into the wile, ye would but have cowered under the verdict of a judgment that has presumed, even before it invoked ye to the trial, to dispose of a free people and an ancient kingdom!"

"It is true, it is true," cried the thegns, rallying from their first superstitious terror, and, with their plain English sense of justice, revolted at the perfidy which the priest's overtures had concealed. "We will hear no more; away with the Swikebode."*

The pale cheek of the monk turned yet paler, he seemed abashed by the storm of resentment he had provoked; and in some fear, perhaps, at the dark faces bent on him, he slunk behind his comrade the knight, who as yet had said nothing, but, his face concealed by his helmet, stood motionless like a

* Traitor-messenger.

steel statue. And, in fact, these two ambassadors, the one in his monk garb, the other in his iron array, were types and representatives of the two forces now brought to bear upon Harold and England—Chivalry and the Church.

At the momentary discomfiture of the Priest, now stood forth the Warrior; and, throwing back his helmet, so that the whole steel cap rested on the nape of the neck, leaving the haughty face and half-shaven head bare, Mallet de Graville thus spoke:—

"The ban of the Church is against ye, warriors and chiefs of England, but for the crime of one man! Remove it from yourselves: on his single head be the curse and the consequence. Harold, called king of England—failing the two milder offers of my comrade, thus saith from the lips of his knight (once thy guest, thy admirer, and friend), thus saith William the Norman:—'Though sixty thousand warriors under the banner of the Apostle wait at his beck (and from what I see of thy force, thou canst marshal to thy guilty side scarce a third of the number), yet will Count William lay aside all advantage, save what dwells in strong arm and good cause; and here, in presence of thy thegns, I challenge thee in his name, to decide the sway of this realm by single battle. On horse and in mail, with sword and with spear, knight to knight, man to man, wilt thou meet William the Norman?"

Before Harold could reply, and listen to the first impulse of a valor, which his worst Norman maligner, in the after day of triumphant calumny, never so lied as to impugn, the thegns themselves, almost with one voice, took up the reply.

"No strife between a man and a man shall decide the liberties of thousands!"

"Never!" exclaimed Gurth. "It were an insult to the whole people to regard this as a strife between two chiefs,—which should wear a crown. When the invader is in our land, the war is with a nation, not a king. And, by the very offer, this Norman Count (who cannot even speak our tongue) shows how little he knows of the laws, by which, under our native kings, we have all as great an interest as a king himself, in our Fatherland."

"Thou hast heard the answer of England from those lips, Sire de Graville," said Harold: "mine but repeat and sanction it. I will not give the crown to William in lieu for disgrace and an Earldom. I will not abide by the arbitrement of a Pope who has dared to affix a curse upon freedom. I will not so violate the principle which in these realms knits king and people, as to arrogate to my single arm the right to dispose of the birthright of the living, and their races unborn; nor will I deprive the meanest soldier under my banner, of the joy and the glory to fight for his native land. If William seek me, he shall find me where war is the fiercest, where the corpses of his men lie the thickest on the plains, defending this standard, or rushing on his own. And so, not Monk and Pope, but God in his wisdom, adjudge between us!"

"So be it," said Mallet De Graville, solemnly, and his helmet re-closed over his face. "Look to it, recreant knight, perjured Christian, and unsurping King! The bones of the Dead fight against thee."

"And the fleshless hands of the Saints marshal the hosts of the living," said the Monk.

And so the messengers turned, without obeisance or salute, and strode silently away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE rest of that day, and the whole of the next, were consumed by both armaments in the completion of their preparations.

William was willing to delay the engagement as long as he could; for he was not without hope that Harold might abandon his formidable position, and become the assailing party; and, moreover, he wished to have full time for his prelates and priests to inflame to the utmost, by their representations of William's moderation in his embassy, and Harold's presumptuous guilt in rejection, the fiery fanaticism of all enlisted under the gonfanon of the Church.

On the other hand, every delay was of advantage to Harold, in giving him leisure to render his entrenchments yet more effectual, and to allow time for such reinforcements as

his orders had enjoined, or the patriotism of the country might arouse; but, alas! those reinforcements were scanty and insignificant; a few stragglers in the immediate neighborhood arrived, but no aid came from London, no indignant country poured forth a swarming population. In fact, the very fame of Harold, and the good fortune that had hitherto attended his arms, contributed to the stupid lethargy of the people. That he who had just subdued the terrible Norsemen, with the mighty Hardrada at their head, should succumb to those dainty "Frenchmen," as they chose to call the Normans; of whom in their insular ignorance of the continent, they knew but little, and whom they had seen flying in all directions at the return of Godwin; was a preposterous demand on the imagination.

Nor was this all: in London, there had already formed a cabal in favor of the Atheling. The claims of birth can never be so wholly set aside, but what, even for the most unworthy heir of an ancient line, some adherents will be found. The prudent traders thought it best not to engage actively on behalf of the reigning King, in his present combat with the Norman pretender; a large number of would-be statesmen thought it best for the country to remain for the present neutral. Grant the worst—grant that Harold were defeated or slain; would it not be wise to reserve their strength to support the Atheling? William might have some personal cause of quarrel against Harold, but he could have none against Edgar; he might depose the son of Godwin, but could he dare to depose the descendant of Cerdic, the natural heir of Edward? There is reason to think that Stigand, and a large party of the Saxon Churchmen, headed this faction.

But the main causes for defection were not in adherence to one chief or to another. They were to be found in selfish inertness, in stubborn conceit, in the long peace, and the enervate superstition which had relaxed the sinews of the old Saxon manhood; in that indifference to things ancient, which contempt for old names and races engendered; that timorous spirit of calculation, which the over-regard for wealth had fostered; which made men averse to leave trade and farm for the perils of the field, and jeopardize their possessions if the foreigner should prevail.

Accustomed already to kings of a foreign race, and having fared well under Canute, there were many who said, "What matters who sits on the throne? the king must be equally bound by our laws." Then too was heard the favorite argument of all slothful minds: "Time enough yet! one battle lost is not England won. Marry we shall turn out fast eno' if Harold be beaten."

Add to all these causes for apathy and desertion, the haughty jealousies of the several populations not yet wholly fused into one empire. The Northumbrian Danes, untaught even by their recent escape from the Norweigen, regarded with ungrateful coldness a war limited at present to the southern coasts; and the vast territory under Mercia was, with more excuse, equally supine; while their two young Earls, too new in their command to have much sway with their subject populations, had they been in their capitals, had now arrived in London; and there lingered, making head, doubtless, against the intrigues in favor of the Atheling;—so little had Harold's marriage with Aldyth brought him, at the hour of his dreadest need, the power for which happiness had been resigned!

Nor must we put out of account, in summing the causes which at this awful crisis weakened the arm of England, the curse of slavery amongst the theowes, which left the lowest part of the population wholly without interest in the defence of the land. Too late—too late for all but unavailing slaughter, the spirit of the country rose amidst the violated pledges, but under the iron heel, of the Norman Master! Had that spirit put forth all its might for one day with Harold, where had been the centuries of bondage! Oh, shame to the absent—All blessed those present! There was no hope for England out of the scanty lines of the immortal army encamped on the field of Hastings. There, long on earth, and vain vaunts of poor pride, shall be kept the roll of the robber-invaders. In what roll are *your* names, holy Heroes of the Soil? Yes, may the prayer of the Virgin Queen be registered on high; and, assoiled of all sin, O ghosts of the glorious Dead, may ye rise from your graves at the trump of the angel; and your names, lost on earth,

shine radiant and stainless amidst the Hierarchy of Heaven!"

Dull came the shades of evening, and pale through the rolling clouds glimmered the rising stars; when,—all prepared, all arrayed,—Harold sat with Haco and Gurth, in his tent; and before them stood a man, half French by origin, who had just returned from the Norman camp.

"So thou didst mingle with the men undiscovered?" said the King.

"No, not undiscovered, my lord. I fell in with a knight, whose name I have since heard as that of Mallet de Graville, who wilily seemed to believe in what I stated, and who gave me meat and drink, with debonnair courtesy. Then said he abruptly,—'Spy from Harold, thou hast come to see the strength of the Norman. Thou shalt have thy will—follow me.' Therewith he led me, all startled I own, through the lines; and, O King, I should deem them indeed countless as the sands, and resistless as the waves, but that, strange as it may seem to thee, I saw more monks than warriors."

"How! thou jestest!" said Gurth, surprised.

"No; for thousands by thousands, they were praying and kneeling; and their heads were all shaven with the tonsure of priests."

"Priests are they not," cried Harold, with his calm smile, "but doughty warriors and dauntless knights."

Then he continued his questions to the spy; and his smile vanished at the accounts, not only of the numbers of the force, but their vast provision of missiles, and the almost incredible proportion of their cavalry.

As soon as the spy had been dismissed, the King turned to his kinsmen.

"What think you?" he said; "shall we judge ourselves of the foe? The night will be dark anon—our steeds are fleet—and not shod with iron like the Normans;—the sward noiseless—What think you?"

"A merry conceit," cried the blithe Leofwine. "I should like much to see the boar in his den, ere he taste of my spear-point."

"And I," said Gurth, "do feel so restless a fever in my veins, that I would fain cool it by the night air. Let us go: I know all the ways of the country; for hither have I come often with hawk and hound. But let us wait yet till the night is more hushed and deep."

The clouds had gathered over the whole surface of the skies, and there hung sullen; and the mists were cold and gray on the lower grounds, when the four Saxon chiefs set forth on their secret and perilous enterprise.

> "Knights and riders took they none,
> Squires and varlets of foot not one;
> All unarmed of weapon and weed,
> Save the shield, and spear, and the sword
> at need." *

Passing their own sentinels, they entered a wood, Gurth leading the way, and catching glimpses, through the irregular path, of the blazing lights, that shone red over the pause of the Norman war.

William had moved on his army to within about two miles from the farthest outpost of the Saxon, and contracted his lines into compact space; the reconnoiterers were thus enabled, by the light of the links and watchfires, to form no inaccurate notion of the formidable foe whom the morrow was to meet. The ground † on which they stood was high, and in the deep shadow of the wood; with one of the large dykes common to the Saxon boundaries in front, so that, even if discovered, a barrier not easily passed lay between them and the foe.

In regular lines and streets extended huts of branches for the meaner soldiers, leading up, in serried rows but broad vistas, to the tents of the knights, and the gaudier pavilions of the counts and prelates. There, were to be seen the flags of Bretagne and Anjou, of Burgundy, of Flanders, even the ensign of France, which the volunteers from that country had assumed; and right in the midst of this Capital of War, the gorgeous pavilion of William himself, with a dragon of gold before it, surmounting the staff, from which blazed the Papal gonfanon. In every

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* "Ne meinent od els chevalier,
Varlet à pie ne eskuier
Ne nul d'els n'a armes portée,
Forz sol escu, lance, et espée."
Roman de Rou, Second Part, v. 12, 126.

† "Ke d'une angarde[1] u ils 'estuient
Cels de l'ost virent, ki pres furent."
Roman de Rou, Sec. Part, v. 12, 126.

[1] *Angarde*, eminence.

division they heard the anvils of the armorers, the measured tread of the sentries, the neigh and snort of innumerable steeds. And along the lines, between hut and tent, they saw tall shapes passing to and from the forge and smithy, bearing mail, and swords, and shafts. No sound of revel, no laugh of wassail was heard in the consecrated camp; all was astir, but with the grave and earnest preparations of thoughtful men. As the four Saxons halted silent, each might have heard, through the remoter din, the other's painful breathing.

At length, from two tents, placed to the right and left of the Duke's pavilion, there came a sweet tinkling sound, as of deep silver bells. At that note there was an evident and universal commotion throughout the armament. The roar of the hammers ceased; and, from every green hut and every gray tent, swarmed the host. Now, rows of living men lined the camp-streets, leaving still a free, though narrow passage in the midst. And, by the blaze of more than a thousand torches, the Saxons saw processions of priests, in their robes and aubes, with censer and rood, coming down the various avenues. As the priests paused, the warriors knelt; and there was a low murmur as if of confession, and the sign of lifted hands, as if in absolution and blessing. Suddenly, from the outskirts of the camp, and full in sight, emerged, from one of the cross lanes, Odo of Bayeux himself, in his white surplice, and the cross in his right hand. Yea, even to the meanest and lowliest soldiers of the armament, whether taken from honest craft and peaceful calling, or the outpourings of Europe's sinks and sewers, catamarans from the Alps, and cut-throats from the Rhine,—yea, even among the vilest and the meanest, came the anointed brother of the great Duke, the haughtiest prelate in Christendom, whose heart even then was fixed on the Pontiff's throne—there he came, to absolve, and to shrive, and to bless. And the red watchfires streamed on his proud face and spotless robes, as the Children of Wrath knelt around the Delegate of Peace.

Harold's hand clenched firm on the arm of Gurth, and his old scorn of the monk broke forth in his bitter smile and his muttered words. But Gurth's face was sad and awed.

And now, as the huts and the canvas thus gave up the living, they could indeed behold the enormous disparity of numbers with which it was their doom to contend, and over those numbers, that dread intensity of zeal, that sublimity of fanaticism, which from one end of that war-town to the other, consecrated injustice, gave the heroism of the martyr to ambition, and blended the whisper of lusting avarice with the self-applauses of the saint!

Not a word said the four Saxons. But as the priestly procession glided to the farther quarters of the armament, as the soldiers in their neighborhood disappeared within their lodgments, and the torches moved from them to the more distant vistas of the camp, like lines of retreating stars, Gurth heaved a heavy sigh, and turned his horse's head from the scene.

But scarce had they gained the centre of the wood, than there rose, as from the heart of the armament, a swell of solemn voices. For the night had now come to the third watch,* in which, according to the belief of the age, angel and fiend were alike astir, and that church-division of time was marked and hallowed by a monastic hymn.

Inexpressibly grave, solemn, and mournful came the strain through the drooping boughs, and the heavy darkness of the air; and it continued to thrill in the ears of the riders till they had passed the wood, and the cheerful watchfires from their own heights broke upon them to guide their way. They rode rapidly, but still in silence, past their sentries; and, ascending the slopes, where the force lay thick, how different were the sounds that smote them! Round the large fires the men grouped in great circles, with the ale-horns and flagons passing merrily from hand to hand; shouts of drink-hæl and was-hæl, bursts of gay laughter, snatches of old songs, old as the days of Athelstan,—varying, where the Anglo-Danes lay, into the far more animated and kindling poetry of the Pirate North,—still spoke of the heathen time when War was a joy, and Valhalla was the heaven.

"By my faith," said Leofwine brightening;

* Midnight.

"these are sounds and sights that do a man's heart good, after those doleful ditties, and the long faces of the shavelings. I vow by St. Alban, that I felt my veins curdling into icebolts, when that dirge came through the woodholt. Hollo, Sexwolf, my tall man, lift us up that full horn of thine, and keep thyself within the pins, Master Wassailer; we must have steady feet and cool heads to-morrow."

Sexwolf, who, with a band of Harold's veterans, was at full carousal, started up at the young Earl's greetings, and looked lovingly into his smiling face as he reached him the horn.

"Heed what my brother bids thee, Sexwolf," said Harold severely; "the hands that draw hafts against us to-morrow will not tremble with the night's wassail."

"Nor ours either, my lord the King," said Sexwolf, boldly; "our heads can bear both drink and blows,—and—(sinking his voice into a whisper) the rumor runs that the odds are so against us, that I would not, for all thy fair brother's earldoms, have our men other than blithe to-night."

Harold answered not, but moved on, and coming then within full sight of the bold Saxons of Kent, the unmixed sons of the Saxon soil, and the special favorers of the House of Godwin, so affectionate, hearty, and cordial was their joyous shout of his name, that he felt his kingly heart leap within him. Dismounting, he entered the circle, and with the august frankness of a noble chief, nobly popular, gave to all, cheering smile and animating word. That done, he said more gravely: "In less than an hour, all wassail must cease,—my bodes will come round; and then sound sleep, my brave merry men, and lusty rising with the lark!"

"As you will, as you will, dear our King," cried Vebba, as spokesman for the soldiers. "Fear us not—life and death, we are yours."

"Life and death yours, and freedom's," cried the Kent men.

Coming now towards the royal tent beside the standard, the discipline was more perfect, and the hush decorous. For round that standard, were both the special body-guard of the King, and the volunteers from London and Middlesex; men more intelligent than the bulk of the army, and more gravely aware, therefore, of the might of the Norman sword.

Harold entered his tent, and threw himself on his couch, in deep reverie; his brothers and Haco watched him silently. At length, Gurth approached; and with a reverence rare in the familiar intercourse between the two, knelt at his brother's side, and, taking Harold's hand in his, looked him full in the face, his eyes moist with tears, and said thus:

"Oh, Harold! never prayer have I asked of thee, that thou hast not granted: grant me this! sorest of all, it may be, to grant, but most fitting of all for me to press. Think not, O beloved brother, O honored King, think not it is with slighting reverence, that I lay rough hand on the wound deepest at thy heart. But, however surprised or compelled, sure it is that thou didst make oath to William, and upon the relics of saints; avoid this battle, for I see that thought is now within thy soul; that thought haunted thee in the words of the monk to-day; in the sight of that awful camp to-night;—avoid this battle! and do not thyself stand in arms against the man to whom the oath was pledged!"

"Gurth, Gurth!" exclaimed Harold, pale and writhing.

"We," continued his brother, "we at least have taken no oath, no perjury is charged against us; vainly the thunders of the Vatican are launched on our heads. Our war is just: we but defend our country. Leave us, then, to fight to-morrow; thou retire towards London and raise fresh armies; if we win the danger is past; if we lose thou wilt avenge us. And England is not lost while thou survivest."

"Gurth, Gurth!" again exclaimed Harold, in a voice piercing in its pathos of reproach.

"Gurth counsels well," said Haco, abruptly; "there can be no doubt of the wisdom of his words. Let the King's kinsmen lead the troops; let the King himself with his guard hasten to London, and ravage and lay waste the country as he retreats by the way;*

* This counsel the Norman chronicler ascribes to Gurth, but it is so at variance with the character of that hero, that it is here assigned to the unscrupulous intellect of Haco.

so that even if William beat us, all supplies will fail him; he will be in a land without forage, and victory here will aid him nought; for you, my liege, will have a force equal to his own, ere he can march to the gates of London."

"Faith and troth, the young Haco speaks like a graybeard; he hath not lived in Rouen for nought," qouth Leofwine. "Hear him, my Harold, and leave us to shave the Normans yet more closely than the barber hath already shorn."

Harold turned ear and eye to each of the speakers, and as Leofwine closed, he smiled.

"Ye have chid me well, kinsmen, for a thought that had entered into my mind ere ye spake"—

Gurth interrupted the King, and said anxiously,—

"To retreat with the whole army upon London, and refuse to meet the Norman till with numbers more fairly matched?"

"That had been my thought," said Harold, surprised.

"Such for a moment, too, was mine," said Gurth, sadly; "but it is too late. Such a measure, now, would have all the disgrace of flight, and bring none of the profits of retreat. The ban of the Church would get wind; our priests, awed and alarmed, might wield it against us; the whole population would be damped and disheartened; rivals to the crown might start up; the realm be divided. No, it is impossible!"

"Impossible," said Harold, calmly. "And if the army cannot retreat, of all men to stand firm, surely it is the Captain and the King. *I*, Gurth, leave others to dare the fate from which I fly! *I* give weight to the impious curse of the Pope, by shrinking from its idle blast! *I* confirm and ratify the oath, from which all law must absolve me, by forsaking the cause of the land which I purify myself when I guard! *I* leave to others the agony of the martyrdom or the glory of the conquest! Gurth, thou art more cruel than the Norman! And I, son of Sweyn, *I* ravage the land committed to my charge, and despoil the fields which I cannot keep! Oh, Haco, that indeed were to be the traitor and the recreant! No, whatever the sin of my oath, never will I believe that Heaven can punish millions for the error of one man. Let the bones of the dead war against us; in life, they were men like ourselves, and no saints in the calendar so holy as the freemen who fight for their hearths and their altars. Nor do I see aught to alarm us even in these grave human odds. We have but to keep fast these entrenchments; preserve, man by man, our invincible line; and the waves will but split on our rock: ere the sun set tomorrow, we shall see the tide ebb, leaving, as waifs, but the dead of the baffled invader.

"Fare ye well, loving kinsmen; kiss me, my brothers; kiss me on the cheek, my Haco. Go now to your tents. Sleep in peace, and wake with the trumpet to the gladness of noble war!"

Slowly the Earls left the King; slowest of all the lingering Gurth; and when all were gone, and Harold was alone, he threw round a rapid troubled glance, and then, hurrying to the simple imageless crucifix that stood on its pedestal at the farther end of the tent, he fell on his knees, and faltered out, while his breast heaved, and his frame shook with the travail of his passion,—

"If my sin be beyond a pardon, my oath without recall, on me, on me, O Lord of Hosts, on me alone the doom! Not on them, not on them—not on England!"

CHAPTER VII.

On the fourteenth of October, 1066, the day of St. Calixtus, the Norman force was drawn out in battle array. Mass had been said; Odo and the Bishop of Coutance had blessed the troops; and received their vow never more to eat flesh on the anniversary of that day. And Odo had mounted his snow-white charger, and already drawn up the cavalry against the coming of his brother the Duke. The army was marshalled in three great divisions.

Roger de Montgommeri and William Fitzosborne led the first; and with them were the forces from Picardy and the countship of Boulogne, and the fiery Franks; Geoffric Martel and the German Hugues (a prince of fame); Aimeri, Lord of Thouars, and the sons of Alain Fergant, Duke of Bretagne,

led the second, which comprised the main bulk of the allies from Bretagne, and Maine, and Poitou. But both these divisions were intermixed with Normans, under their own special Norman chiefs.

The third section embraced the flower of martial Europe, the most renowned of the Norman race; whether those knights bore the French titles into which their ancestral Scandinavian names had been transformed—Sires of Beaufou and Harcourt, Abbeville, and de Molun, Montfichet, Grantmesnil, Lacie, D'Aincourt, and D'Asnieres;—or whether, still preserving, amidst their daintier titles, the old names that had scattered dismay through the seas of the Baltic; Osborne and Tonstain, Mallet and Bulver, Brand and Bruse.* And over this division presided Duke William. Here was the main body of the matchless cavalry, to which, however, orders were given to support either of the other sections, as need might demand. And with this body were also the reserve. For it is curious to notice, that William's strategy resembled in much that of the last great Invader of Nations—relying first upon the effect of the charge; secondly, upon a vast reserve brought to bear at the exact moment on the weakest point of the foe.

All the horsemen were in complete link or net mail,† armed with spears and strong swords, and long, pear-shaped shields, with the device either of a cross or a dragon.‡ The archers, on whom William greatly relied, were numerous in all three of the corps,§ were armed more lightly—helms on their heads, but with leather or quilted breast-plates, and "panels," or gaiters, for the lower limbs.

But before the chiefs and captains rode to their several posts, they assembled round William, whom Fitzosborne had called betimes, and who had not yet endued his heavy mail, that all men might see suspended from his throat certain relics chosen out of those on which Harold had pledged his fatal oath. Standing on an eminence in front of all his lines, the consecrated banner behind him, and Bayard, his Spanish destrier, held by his squires at his side, the Duke conversed cheerily with his barons, often pointing to the relics. Then, in sight of all, he put on his mail, and, by the haste of his squires, the back-piece was presented to him first. The superstitious Normans recoiled as at an evil omen.

"Tut!" said the ready chief; "not in omens and divinations, but in God, trust I! Yet, good omen indeed is this, and one that may give heart to the most doubtful; for it betokens that the last shall be first—the dukedom a kingdom—the count a king! Ho there, Rou de Terni, as Hereditary Standard-bearer take thy right, and hold fast to yon holy gonfanon."

"*Grant merci*," said De Terni, "not to-day shall a standard be borne by me, for I shall have need of my right arm for my sword, and my left for my charger's rein and my trusty shield."

"Thou sayst right, and we can ill spare such a warrior. Gautier Giffart, Sire de Longueville, to thee is the gonfanon."

"*Beau Sire*," answered Gautier; "*par Dex, Merci.* But my head is gray and my arm weak; and the little strength left me I would spend in smiting the English at the head of my men."

"*Per la resplendar Dé*," cried William frowning;—"do ye think, my proud vavasours, to fail me in this great need?"

"Nay," said Gautier; "but I have a great host of chevaliers and paid soldiers, and without the old man at their head will they fight as well?"

"Then, approach thou, Tonstain le Blanc, son of Rou," said William; "and be thine the charge of a standard that shall wave ere

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* Osborne—(Asbiorn),—one of the most common of Danish and Norwegian names. Tonstain, Toustain, or Tostain, the same as Tosti, or Tostig,—Danish. (Harold's brother is called Tostain or Toustain, in the Norman chronicles.) Brand, a name common to Dane and Norwegian—Bulmer is a Norwegian name, and so is Bulver, or Bolvär—which is, indeed, so purely Scandinavian that it is one of the warlike names given to Odin himself by the Norse-scalds. Bulverhithe still commemorates the landing of a Norwegian son of the war-god. Bruce, the ancestor of the deathless Scot, also bears in that name, more illustrious than all, the proof of his Scandinavian birth.

† This mail appears in that age to have been sewn upon linen or cloth. In the later age of the crusaders, it was more artful, and the links supported each other, without being attached to any other material.

‡ Bayeux Tapestry.

§ The cross-bow is not to be seen in the Bayeux Tapestry—the Norman bows are not long.

nightfall over the brows of thy—*King!*" A young knight, tall and strong as his Danish ancestor, stept forth, and laid gripe on the banner.

Then William, now completely armed, save his helmet, sprang at one bound on his steed. A shout of admiration rang from the Queus and knights.

"Saw ye ever such *beau rei?*" * said the Vicomte de Thouars.

The shout was caught by the lines, and echoed far, wide, and deep through the armament, as in all his singular majesty of brow and mien, William rode forth: lifting his hand, the shout hushed, and thus he spoke "loud as a trumpet with a silver sound."

"Normans and soldiers, long renowned in the lips of men, and now hallowed by the blessing of the Church!—I have not brought you over the wide seas for my cause alone;—what I gain, ye gain. If I take the land, you will share it. Fight your best, and spare not;—no retreat, and no quarter! I am not come here for my cause alone, but to avenge our whole nation for the felonies of yonder English. They butchered our kinsmen the Danes, on the night of St. Brice; they murdered Alfred, the brother of their last King, and decimated the Normans who were with him. Yonder they stand,—malefactors that await their doom! and ye the doomsmen! Never, even in a good cause, were yon English illustrious for warlike temper and martial glory.† Remember how easily the Danes subdued them! Are ye less than Danes, or I than Canute? By victory ye obtain vengeance, glory, honors, lands, spoil,—aye, spoil beyond your wildest dreams. By defeat,—yea, even but by loss of ground, ye are given up to the sword! Escape there is not, for the ships are useless. Before you the foe, behind you the ocean! Normans, remember the feats of your countrymen in Sicily! Behold a Sicily more rich! Lordships and lands to the living,—glory and salvation to those who die under the gonfanon of the Church! On, to the cry of the Norman warrior; the cry before which have fled so often the prowest Paladins of Burgundy and France—'*Notre Dame et Dex aide!*'" ‡

* Roman de Rou. † William of Poitiers.
‡ *Dieu nous aide.*

Meanwhile, no less vigilant, and in his own strategy no less skilful, Harold had marshalled his men. He formed two divisions; those in front of the entrenchments; those within it. At the first, the men of Kent, as from time immemorial, claimed the honor of the van, under "the Pale Charger,"—famous banner of Hengist. This force was drawn up in the form of the Anglo-Danish wedge; the foremost lines in the triangle all in heavy mail, armed with their great axes, and covered by their immense shields. Behind these lines, in the interior of the wedge, were the archers, protected by the front rows of the heavy armed; while the few horsemen—few indeed compared with the Norman cavalry—were artfully disposed where they could best harass and distract the formidable chivalry with which they were instructed to skirmish, and not peril actual encounter. Other bodies of the light-armed; slingers, javelin throwers, and archers, were planted in spots carefully selected, according as they were protected by trees, bush-wood, and dykes. The Northumbrians (that is, all the warlike population, north the Humber, including Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, &c.) were, for their present shame and future ruin, absent from that field, save, indeed, a few who had joined Harold in his march to London. But there were the mixed races of Hertfordshire and Essex, with the pure Saxons of Sussex and Surrey, and a large body of the sturdy Anglo-Danes from Lincolnshire, Ely and Norfolk. Men, too, there were, half of old British blood, from Dorset, Somerset, and Gloucester.

And all were marshalled according to those touching and pathetic tactics which speak of a nation more accustomed to defend than to aggrieve. To that field the head of each family led his sons and kinsfolk; every ten families (or tything) were united under their own chosen captain. Every ten of these tythings had, again, some loftier chief, dear to the populace in peace; and so on the holy circle spread from household, hamlet, town,—till, all combined, as one county under one Earl, the warriors fought under the eyes of their own kinsfolk, friends, neighbors, chosen chiefs! What wonder that they were brave?

The second division comprised Harold's house carles, or body-guard,—the veterans especially attached to his family,—the companions of his successful wars,—a select band of the martial East-Anglians,—the soldiers supplied by London and Middlesex, and who, both in arms, discipline, martial temper and athletic habits, ranked high among the most stalwart of the troops, mixed as their descent was, from the warlike Dane and the sturdy Saxon. In this division, too, was comprised the reserve. And it was all encompassed by the palisades and breastworks, to which were but three sorties, whence the defenders might sally, or through which at need the vanguard might secure a retreat.

All the heavy armed had mail and shields similar to the Normans, though somewhat less heavy; the light armed had, some tunics of quilted linen, some of hide; helmets of the last material, spears, javelins, swords, and clubs. But the main arm of the host was in the great shield, and the great axe wielded by men larger in stature and stronger of muscle than the majority of the Normans, whose physical race had deteriorated partly by inter-marriage with the more delicate Frank, partly by the haughty disdain of foot exercise.

Mounting a swift and light steed, intended not for encounter (for it was the custom of English kings to fight on foot, in token that where they fought there was no retreat), but to bear the rider rapidly from line to line,* King Harold rode to the front of the vanguard;—his brothers by his side. His head, like his great foe's, was bare, nor could there be a more striking contrast than that of the broad unwrinkled brow of the Saxon, with his fair locks, the sign of royalty and freedom, parted and falling over the collar of mail, the clear and steadfast eye of blue, the cheek somewhat hollowed by kingly cares, but flushed now with manly pride—the form stalwart and erect, but spare in its graceful symmetry, and void of all that theatric pomp of bearing which was assumed by William—no greater contrast could there be than that which the simple earnest Hero-king presented, to the brow furrowed with harsh ire and politic wile, the shaven hair of monastic affectation, the dark, sparkling tiger eye, and the vast proportions that awed the gaze in the port and form of the imperious Norman. Deep and loud and hearty as the shout with which his armaments had welcomed William, was that which now greeted the King of the English host: and clear and full, and practised in the storm of popular assemblies, went his voice down the listening lines.

"This day, O friends and Englishmen, sons of our common land—this day ye fight for liberty. The Count of the Normans hath, I know, a mighty army; I disguise not its strength. That army he hath collected together, by promising to each man a share in the spoils of England. Already, in his court and his camp, he hath parcelled out the lands of this kingdom; and fierce are the robbers who fight for the hope of plunder! But he cannot offer to his greatest chief boons nobler than those I offer to my meanest freeman—liberty, and right, and law, in the soil of his fathers! Ye have heard of the miseries endured in the old time under the Dane, but they were slight indeed to those which ye may expect from the Norman. The Dane was kindred to us in language and in law, and who now can tell Saxon from Dane? But yon men would rule ye in a language ye know not, by a law that claims the crown as the right of the sword, and divides the land among the hirelings of an army. We baptized the Dane, and the Church tamed his fierce soul into peace; but yon men make the Church itself their ally, and march to carnage under the banner profaned to the foulest of human wrongs! Outscourings of all nations, they come against you: Ye fight as brothers under the eyes of your fathers and chosen chiefs; ye fight for the women ye would save from the ravisher; ye fight for the children ye would guard from eternal bondage; ye fight for the altars which yon banner now darkens! Foreign priest is a tyrant as ruthless and stern as ye shall find foreign baron and king! Let no man dream of retreat; every inch of ground that ye yield is the soil of your native land. For me, on this field I peril all.

* Thus, when, at the battle of Barnet, Earl Warwick, the king maker, slew his horse and fought on foot, he followed the old traditional custom of Saxon chiefs.

Think that mine eye is upon you wherever ye are. If a line waver or shrink, ye shall hear in the midst the voice of your King. Hold fast to your ranks, remember, such amongst you as fought with me against Hardrada,—remember that it was not till the Norsemen lost, by rash sallies, their serried array, that our arms prevailed against them. Be warned by their fatal error, break not the form of the battle; and I tell you on the faith of a soldier who never yet hath left field without victory,—that ye cannot be beaten. While I speak, the winds swell the sails of the Norse ships, bearing home the corpse of Hardrada. Accomplish this day the last triumph of England; add to these hills a new mount of the conquered dead! And when, in far times and strange lands, scald and scop shall praise the brave man for some valiant deed wrought in some holy cause, they shall say, 'He was brave as those who fought by the side of Harold, and swept from the sward of England the hosts of the haughty Norman.'"

Scarcely had the rapturous hurrahs of the Saxons closed on this speech, when full in sight, north-west of Hastings, came the first division of the Invader.

Harold remained gazing at them, and not seeing the other sections in movement, said to Gurth, "If these are all that they venture out, the day is ours."

"Look yonder!" said the sombre Haco, and he pointed to the long array that now gleamed from the wood through which the Saxon kinsmen had passed the night before; and scarcely were these cohorts in view, than lo! from a third quarter advanced the glittering knighthood under the Duke. All three divisions came on in simultaneous assault, two on either wing of the Saxon vanguard, the third (the Norman) towards the entrenchments.

In the midst of the Duke's cohort was the sacred gonfanon, and in front of it and of the whole line, rode a strange warrior of gigantic height. And as he rode, the warrior sang,—

> 'Chaunting loud the lusty strain
> Of Roland and of Charlemain,
> And the dead, who, deathless all,
> Fell at famous Roncesval." *

* Devant li Dus alout cantant
De Karlemaine è de Rollant,
Ed 'Olever e des Vassalls
Ki morurent en Ronchevals.
ROMAN DE ROU, Part ii. l. 13,151.

Much research has been made by French antiquaries, to discover the old Chant de Roland, but in vain.

* W. PICT. *Chron. de Nor.*

And the knights, no longer singing hymn and litany, swelled, hoarse through their helmets, the martial chorus. This warrior, in front of the Duke and the horsemen, seemed beside himself with the joy of battle. As he rode, and as he chaunted, he threw up his sword in the air like a gleeman, catching it nimbly as it fell,* and flourishing it wildly, till, as if unable to restrain his fierce exhilaration, he fairly put spurs to his horse, and, dashing forward to the very front of a detachment of Saxon riders, shouted,—

"A Taillefer! a Taillefer!" and by voice and gesture challenged forth some one to single combat.

A fiery young thegn who knew the Romance tongue, started forth and crossed swords with the poet; but by what seemed rather a juggler's sleight of hand than a knight's fair fence, Taillefer, again throwing up and catching his sword with incredible rapidity, shore the unhappy Saxon from the helm to the chine, and riding over his corpse, shouting and laughing, he again renewed his challenge. A second rode forth and shared the same fate. The rest of the English horsemen stared at each other aghast; the shouting, singing, juggling giant seemed to them not knight, but demon; and that single incident, preliminary to all other battle, in sight of the whole field, might have sufficed to damp the ardor of the English, had not Leofwine, who had been despatched by the King with a message to the entrenchments, come in front of the detachment; and his gay spirit, roused and stung by the insolence of the Norman, and the evident dismay of the Saxon riders, without thought of his graver duties, he spurred his light half-mailed steed to the Norman giant; and, not even drawing his sword, but with his spear raised over his head, and his form covered by his shield, he cried in Romance tongue, "Go and chaunt to the foul fiend, O croaking minstrel!" Taillefer rushed forward, his sword shivered on the Saxon shield, and

in the same moment he fell a corpse under the hoofs of his steed, transfixed by the Saxon spear.

A cry of woe, in which even William (who, proud of his poet's achievements, had pressed to the foremost line to see this new encounter) joined his deep voice, wailed through the Norman ranks; while Leofwine rode deliberately towards them, halted a moment, and then flung his spear in the midst with so deadly an aim, that a young knight, within two of William, reeled on his saddle, groaned, and fell.

"How like ye, O Normans, the Saxon gleemen?" said Leofwine, as he turned slowly, regained the detachment, and bade them heed carefully the orders they had received, viz., to avoid the direct charge of the Norman horse, but to take every occasion to harass and divert the stragglers; and then blithely singing a Saxon stave, as if inspired by Norman minstrelsy, he rode into the entrenchments.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE two brethren of Waltham, Osgood and Ailred, had arrived a little after daybreak at the spot in which, about half a mile to the rear of Harold's palisades, the beasts of burden that had borne the heavy arms, missiles, luggage, and forage of the Saxon march, were placed in and about the fenced yards of a farm. And many human beings, of both sexes and various ranks, were there assembled, some in breathless expectation, some in careless talk, some in fervent prayer.

The master of the farm, his sons, and the able-bodied ceorls in his employ, had joined the forces of the King, under Gurth, as Earl of the county.* But many aged theowes, past military service, and young children, grouped around: the first, stolid and indifferent—the last, prattling, curious, lively, gay. There, too, were the wives of some of the soldiers, who, as common in Saxon expeditions, had followed their husbands to the field; and there, too, were the ladies of many a Hlaford in the neighboring district, who, no less true to their mates than the wives of humbler men, were drawn by their English hearts to the fatal spot. A small wooden chapel, half decayed, stood a little behind, with its doors wide open, a sanctuary in case of need; and the interior was thronged with kneeling suppliants.

The two monks joined, with pious gladness, some of their sacred calling, who were leaning over the low wall, and straining their eyes towards the bristling field. A little apart from them, and from all, stood a female; the hood drawn over her face, silent in her unknown thoughts.

By and by, as the march of the Norman multitude sounded hollow, and the trumps, and the fifes, and the shouts, rolled on through the air, in many a stormy peal,—the two Abbots in the Saxon camp, with their attendant monks, came riding towards the farm from the entrenchments.

The groups gathered round these new comers in haste and eagerness.

"The battle hath begun," said the Abbot of Hide, gravely. "Pray God for England, for never was its people in peril so great from man."

The female started and shuddered at those words.

"And the King, the King," she cried, in a sudden and thrilling voice; "where is he?—the King?"

"Daughter," said the Abbot, "the King's post is by his standard; but I left him in the van of his troops. Where he may be now I know not. Wherever the foe presses sorest."

Then dismounting, the Abbots entered the yard, to be accosted instantly by all the wives, who deemed, poor souls, that the holy men must, throughout all the field, have seen *their* lords; for each felt as if God's world hung but on the single life in which each pale trembler lived.

With all their faults of ignorance and superstition, the Saxon churchmen loved their flocks; and the good Abbots gave what comfort was in their power, and then passed

* For, as Sir F. Palgrave shrewdly conjectures, upon the dismemberment of the vast earldom of Wessex, on Harold's accession to the throne, that portion of it comprising Sussex (the old government of his grandfather Wolnoth), seems to have been assigned to Gurth.

into the chapel, where all who could find room followed them.

The war now raged.

The two divisions of the invading army that included the auxiliaries, had sought in vain to surround the English vanguard, and take it in the rear: that noble phalanx had no rear. Deepest and strongest at the base of the triangle, everywhere a front opposed the foe; shields formed a rampart against the dart—spears a palisade against the horse. While that vanguard maintained its ground, William could not pierce to the entrenchments, the strength of which, however, he was enabled to perceive. He now changed his tactics, joined his knighthood to the other sections, threw his hosts rapidly into many wings, and leaving broad spaces between his archers—who continued their fiery hail—ordered his heavy-armed foot to advance on all sides upon the wedge, and break its ranks for the awaiting charge of his horse.

Harold, still in the centre of the vanguard, amidst the men of Kent, continued to animate them all with voice and hand; and, as the Normans now closed in, he flung himself from his steed, and strode on foot, with his mighty battle-axe, to the spot where the rush was dreadest.

Now came the shock—the fight hand to hand: spear and lance were thrown aside, axe and sword rose and shore. But before the close-serried lines of the English, with their physical strength, and veteran practice in their own special arm, the Norman foot were mowed as by the scythe. In vain, in the intervals, thundered the repeated charges of the fiery knights; in vain,—throughout all, came the shaft and the bolt.

Animated by the presence of their King fighting amongst them as a simple soldier, but with his eye ever quick to foresee, his voice ever prompt to warn, the men of Kent swerved not a foot from their indomitable ranks. The Norman infantry wavered and gave way; on, step by step, still unbroken in array, pressed the English. And their cry, "Out! out! Holy Crosse!" rose high above the flagging sound of "Ha Rou! Ha Rou!—Notre Dame!"

"*Per la resplendar Dé*," cried William. "Our soldiers are but women in the garb of Normans. Ho, spears to the rescue! With me to the charge, Sires D'Aumale and De Littain—with me, gallant Bruse, and De Mortain; with me, De Graville and Grantmesnil—Dex aide! Notre Dame." And heading his prowest knights, William came, as a thunderbolt, on the bills and shields. Harold, who scarce a minute before had been in a remoter rank, was already at the brunt of that charge. At his word down knelt the foremost line, leaving nought but their shields and their spear-points against the horse. While behind them, the axe in both hands, bent forward the soldiery in the second rank, to smite and to crush. And, from the core of the wedge, poured the shafts of the archers. Down rolled in the dust half the charge of those knights. Bruse reeled on his saddle; the dread right hand of D'Aumale fell lopped by the axe; De Graville, hurled from his horse, rolled at the feet of Harold; and William, borne by his great steed and his colossal strength into the third rank—there dealt, right and left, the fierce strokes of his iron club, till he felt his horse sinking under him—and had scarcely time to back from the foe—scarcely time to get beyond reach of their weapons, ere the Spanish destrier, frightfully gashed through its strong mail, fell dead on the plain. His knights swept round him. Twenty barons leapt from selle to yield him their chargers. He chose the one nearest to hand, sprang to foot and to stirrup, and rode back to his lines. Meanwhile De Graville's casque, its strings broken by the shock, had fallen off, and as Harold was about to strike, he recognized his guest.

Holding up his hand to keep off the press of his men, the generous King said briefly—"Rise and retreat!—no time on this field for captor and captive. He whom thou hast called recreant knight, has been Saxon host. Thou hast fought by his side, thou shalt not die by his hand!—Go."

Not a word spoke De Graville; but his dark eye dwelt one minute with mingled pity and reverence on the King; then rising, he turned away; and slowly, as if he disdained to fly, strode back over the corpses of his countrymen.

"Stay, all hands!" cried the King to his archers; "yon man hath tasted our salt, and

done us good service of old. He hath paid his weregeld."

Not a shaft was discharged.

Meanwhile, the Norman infantry, who had been before recoiling, no sooner saw their Duke (whom they recognized by his steed and equipment) fall on the ground, than, setting up a shout—"The Duke is dead!" they fairly turned round, and fled fast in disorder.

The fortune of the day was now well nigh turned in favor of the Saxons; and the confusion of the Normans, as the cry of, "The Duke is dead!" reached, and circled round, the host, would have been irrecoverable, had Harold possessed a cavalry fit to press the advantage gained, or had not William himself rushed into the midst of the fugitives, throwing his helmet back on his neck, showing his face, all animated with fierce valor and disdainful wrath, while he cried aloud—

"I live, ye varlets! Behold the face of a chief who never yet forgave coward! Ay, tremble more at me than at yon English, doomed and accursed as they be! Ye Normans, ye! I blush for you!" and striking the foremost in the retreat with the flat of his sword, chiding, stimulating, threatening, promising in a breath, he succeeded in staying the flight, reforming the lines, and dispelling the general panic. Then, as he joined his own chosen knights, and surveyed the field, he beheld an opening which the advanced position of the Saxon vanguard had left, and by which his knights might gain the entrenchments. He mused a moment, his face still bare, and brightening, as he mused. Looking round him, he saw Mallet de Graville, who had remounted, and said, shortly,

"*Pardex*, dear knight, we thought you already with St. Michael!—joy, that you live yet to be an English earl. Look you, ride to Fitzosborne with the signal-word, '*Li Hardiz passent avant!*' Off, and quick."

De Graville bowed, and darted across the plain.

"Now, my Quens and chevaliers," said William, gaily, as he closed his helmet, and took from his squire another spear; "now, I shall give ye the day's great pastime. Pass the word, Sire de Tancarville, to every horseman—'Charge!—to the Standard!'"

The word passed, the steeds bounded, and the whole force of William's knighthood, scouring the plain to the rear of the Saxon vanguard, made for the entrenchments.

At that sight, Harold, divining the object, and seeing this new and more urgent demand on his presence, halted the battalions over which he had presided, and, yielding the command to Leofwine, once more briefly but strenuously enjoined the troops to heed well their leaders, and on no account to break the wedge, in the form of which lay their whole strength, both against the cavalry and the greater number of the foe. Then mounting his horse, and attended only by Haco, he spurred across the plain, in the opposite direction to that taken by the Normans. In doing so, he was forced to make a considerable circuit towards the rear of the entrenchment, and the farm, with its watchful groups, came in sight. He distinguished the garbs of the women, and Haco said to him,—

"There wait the wives, to welcome the living victors."

"Or search their lords among the dead!" answered Harold. "Who, Haco, if we fail, will search for us?"

As the word left his lips, he saw, under a lonely thorn-tree, and scarce out of bowshot from the entrenchments, a woman seated. The King looked hard at the bended, hooded form.

"Poor wretch!" he murmured, "her heart is in the battle!" And he shouted aloud, "Farther off! farther off!—the war rushes hitherward!"

At the sound of that voice the woman rose, stretched her arms, and sprang forward. But the Saxon chiefs had already turned their faces towards the neighboring ingress into the ramparts, and beheld not her movement, while the tramp of rushing chargers, the shout and the roar of clashing war, drowned the wail of her feeble cry.

"I have heard him again, again!" murmured the woman, "God be praised!" and she re-seated herself quietly under the lonely thorn.

As Harold and Haco sprang to their feet within the entrenchments, the shout of "the King—the King!—Holy Crosse!" came in time to rally the force at the farther end,

now undergoing the full storm of the Norman chivalry.

The willow ramparts were already rent and hewed beneath the hoofs of horses and the clash of swords; and the sharp points on the frontals of the Norman destriers were already gleaming within the entrenchments, when Harold arrived at the brunt of action. The tide was then turned; not one of those rash riders left the entrenchments they had gained; steel and horse alike went down beneath the ponderous battle-axes; and William, again foiled and baffled, drew off his cavalry with the reluctant conviction that those breastworks, so manned, were not to be won by horse. Slowly the knights retreated down the slope of the hillock, and the English, animated by that sight, would have left their stronghold to pursue, but for the warning cry of Harold. The interval in the strife thus gained was promptly and vigorously employed in repairing the palisades. And this done, Harold, turning to Haco, and the thegns round him, said joyously,—

"By Heaven's help we shall yet win this day. And know you not that it is my fortunate day—the day on which, hitherto, all hath prospered with me, in peace and in war—the day of my birth?"

"Of your birth!" echoed Haco in surprise.

"Ay—did you not know it?"

"Nay!—strange!—it is also the birthday of Duke William! What would astrologers say to the meeting of such stars?" *

Harold's cheek paled, but his helmet concealed the paleness:—his arm drooped. The strange dream of his youth again came distinct before him, as it had come in the hall of the Norman at the sight of the ghastly relics;—again he saw the shadowy hand from the cloud—again heard the voice murmuring—"Lo the star that shone on the birth of the victor;" again he heard the words of Hilda interpreting the dream—again the chaunt which the dead or the fiend had poured from the rigid lips of the Vala. It boomed on his ear; hollow as a death bell it knelled through the roar of battle—

"Never
Crown and brow shall Force dissever,
Till the dead men, unforgiving,
Loose the war-steeds on the living;
Till a sun whose race is ending
Sees the rival stars contending,
Where the dead men, unforgiving,
Wheel their war-steeds round the living!"

Faded the vision, and died the chaunt, as a breath that dims, and vanishes from, the mirror of steel. The breath was gone—the firm steel was bright once more; and suddenly the King was recalled to the sense of the present hour, by shouts and cries in which the yell of Norman triumph predominated, at the further end of the field. The signal words to Fitzosborne had conveyed to that chief the order for the mock charge on the Saxon vanguard, to be followed by the feigned flight: and so artfully had this stratagem been practised, that despite all the solemn orders of Harold, despite even the warning cry of Leofwine, who, rash and gay hearted though he was, had yet a captain's skill—the bold English, their blood heated by long contest and seeming victory, could not resist pursuit. They rushed forward impetuously, breaking the order of their hitherto indomitable phalanx, and the more eagerly because the Normans had unwittingly taken their way towards a part of the ground concealing dykes and ditches, into which the English trusted to precipitate the foe. It was as William's knights retreated from the breastworks that this fatal error was committed; and pointing towards the disordered Saxons with a wild laugh of revengeful joy, William set spurs to his horse, and, followed by all his chivalry, joined the cavalry of Poitou and Boulogne in their swoop upon the scattered array. Already the Norman infantry had turned round—already the horses, that lay in ambush amongst the brushwood near the dykes, had thundered forth. The whole of the late impregnable vanguard was broken up,—divided corps from corps,—hemmed in; horse after horse charging to the rear, to the front, to the flank, to the right, to the left.

Gurth, with the men of Surrey and Sussex had alone kept their ground, but they were

* Harold's birthday was certainly the 14th of October. According to Mr. Roscoe, in his "Life of William the Conqueror," William was born also on the 14th of October.

now compelled to advance to the aid of their scattered comrades; and coming up in close order, they not only awhile stayed the slaughter, but again half turned the day. Knowing the country thoroughly, Gurth lured the foe into the ditches concealed within a hundred yards of their own ambush, and there the havoc of the foreigners was so great, that the hollows are said to have been literally made level with the plain by their corpses. Yet this combat, however fierce, and however skill might seek to repair the former error, could not be long maintained against such disparity of numbers. And meanwhile, the whole of the division under Geoffroi Martel, and his co-captains, had by a fresh order of William's, occupied the space between the entrenchments and the more distant engagement; thus when Harold looked up, he saw the foot of the hillocks so lined with steel, as to render it hopeless that he himself could win to the aid of his vanguard. He set his teeth firmly, looked on, and only by gesture and smothered exclamations showed his emotions of hope and fear. At length he cried,—

"Gallant Gurth! brave Leofwine, look to their pennons; right, right; well fought, sturdy Vebba! Ha! they are moving this way. The wedge cleaves on—it cuts its path through the heart of the foe." And indeed, the chiefs now drawing off the shattered remains of their countrymen, still disunited, but still each section shaping itself wedge-like,—on came the English, with their shields over their heads, through the tempest of missiles, against the rush of the steeds, here and there, through the plains, up the slopes, towards the entrenchment, in the teeth of the formidable array of Martel, and harassed behind by hosts that seemed numberless. The King could restrain himself no longer. He selected five hundred of his bravest and more practised veterans, yet comparatively fresh, and commanding the rest to stay firm, descended the hills, and charged unexpectedly into the rear of the mingled Normans and Bretons.

This sortie, well-timed though desperate, served to cover and favor the retreat of the straggling Saxons. Many, indeed, were cut off, but Gurth, Leofwine, and Vebba hewed the way for their followers to the side of Harold, and entered the entrenchments, close followed by the nearer foe, who were again repulsed amidst the shouts of the English.

But, alas! small indeed the band thus saved, and hopeless the thought that the small detachments of English still surviving and scattered over the plain, would ever win to their aid.

Yet in those scattered remnants were, perhaps, almost the only men who, availing themselves of their acquaintance with the country, and despairing of victory, escaped by flight from the Field of Sanguelac. Nevertheless, within the entrenchments not a man had lost heart; the day was already far advanced, no impression had been yet made on the outworks, the position seemed as impregnable as a fortress of stone; and, truth to say, even the bravest Normans were disheartened, when they looked to that eminence which had foiled the charge of William himself. The Duke, in the recent *mêlée*, had received more than one wound, his third horse that day had been slain under him. The slaughter among the knights and nobles had been immense, for they had exposed their persons with the most desperate valor. And William, after surveying the rout of nearly one half of the English army, heard everywhere, to his wrath and his shame, murmurs of discontent and dismay at the prospect of scaling the heights, in which the gallant remnant had found their refuge. At this critical juncture, Odo of Bayeux, who had hitherto remained in the rear,* with the crowds of monks that accompanied the armament, rode into the full field, where all the hosts were re-forming their lines. He was in complete mail, but a white surplice was drawn over the steel, his head was bare, and in his right hand he bore the crozier. A formidable club swung by a leathern noose from his wrist, to be used only for self-defence: the canons forbade the priest to strike merely in assault.

Behind the milk-white steed of Odo came the whole body of reserve, fresh and unbreathed, free from the terrors of their comrades, and stung into proud wrath at the delay of the Norman conquest.

"How now—how now!" cried the prelate; "do ye flag? do ye falter when the sheaves are down, and ye have but to gather

* William Pict.

up the harvest? How now, sons of the Church! warriors of the Cross! avengers of the Saints! Desert your Count, if ye please; but shrink not back from a Lord mightier than man. Lo, I come forth, to ride side by side with my brother, bare headed, the crozier in my hand. He who fails his liege is but a coward—he who fails the Church is apostate!"

The fierce shout of the reserve closed this harangue, and the words of the prelate, as well as the physical aid he brought to back them, renerved the army. And now the whole of William's mighty host, covering the field, till its lines seemed to blend with the gray horizon, came on serried, steadied, orderly—to all sides of the entrenchment. Aware of the inutility of his horse, till the breast-works were cleared, William placed in the van all his heavy armed foot, spearmen, and archers, to open the way through the palisades, the sorties from which had now been carefully closed.

As they came up the hills, Harold turned to Haco and said, "Where is thy battle-axe?"

"Harold," answered Haco, with more than his usual tone of sombre sadness, "I desire now to be thy shield-bearer, for thou must use thine axe with both hands while the day lasts, and thy shield is useless. Wherefore thou strike, and I will shield thee."

"Thou lovest me, then, son of Sweyn; I have sometimes doubted it."

"I love thee as the best part of my life, and with thy life ceases mine: it is my heart that my shield guards when it covers the breast of Harold."

"I would bid thee live, poor youth," whispered Harold; "but what were life if this day were lost? Happy, then, will be those who die!"

Scarce had the words left his lips ere he sprang to the breastworks, and with a sudden sweep of his axe, down dropped a helm that peered above them. But helm after helm succeeds. Now they come on, swarm upon swarm, as wolves on a traveller, as bears round a bark. Countless, amidst their carnage, on they come! The arrows of the Norman blacken the air: with deadly precision, to each arm, each limb, each front exposed above the bulwarks—whirrs the shaft. They clamber the palisades, the foremost fall dead under the Saxon axe; new thousands rush on: vain is the might of Harold, vain had been a Harold's might in every Saxon there! The first row of breast-works is forced—it is trampled, hewed, crushed down, cumbered with the dead. "Ha Rou! Ha Rou! Notre Dame! Notre Dame!" sounds joyous and shrill, the chargers snort and leap, and charge into the circle. High wheels in air the great mace of William; bright by the slaughterers flashes the crosier of the Church.

"On, Normans!—Earldom and land!" cries the Duke.

"On, Sons of the Church! Salvation and heaven!" shouts the voice of Odo.

The first breastwork down—the Saxons yielding inch by inch, foot by foot, are pressed, crushed back, into the second enclosure. The same rush, and swarm, and fight, and cry, and roar:—The second enclosure gives way. And now in the centre of the third—lo, before the eyes of the Normans, towers proudly aloft, and shines in the rays of the western sun, broidered with gold, and, blazing with mystic gems, the standard of England's King! And there, are gathered the reserve of the England host; there, the heroes who had never yet known defeat—unwearied they by the battle—vigorous, high-hearted still; and round them the breast-works were thicker, and stronger, and higher, and fastened by chains to pillars of wood and staves of iron, with the wagons and carts of the baggage, and piled logs of timber—barricades at which even William paused aghast, and Odo stifled an exclamation that became not a priestly lip.

Before that standard, in the front of the men, stood Gurth, and Leofwine, and Haco, and Harold, the last leaning for rest upon his axe, for he was sorely wounded in many places, and the blood oozed through the links of his mail.

Live, Harold; live yet, and Saxon England shall not die!

The English archers had at no time been numerous; most of them had served with the vanguard, and the shafts of those within the ramparts were spent; so that the foe had time to pause and to breathe. The Norman

arrows meanwhile flew fast and thick, but William noted to his grief that they struck against the tall breastworks and barricades, and so failed in the slaughter they should inflict.

He mused a moment, and sent one of his knights to call to him three of the chiefs of the archers. They were soon at the side of his destrier.

"See ye not, *maladroits*," said the Duke, "that your shafts and bolts fall harmless on those ozier walls? Shoot in the air; let the arrow fall perpendicular on those within—fall as the vengeance of the saints falls—direct from heaven! Give me thy bow, Archer,—thus." He drew the bow as he sate on his steed, the arrow flashed up, and descended in the heart of the reserve, within a few feet of the standard.

"So; that standard be your mark," said the Duke, giving back the bow.

The archers withdrew. The order circulated through their bands, and in a few moments more down came the iron rain. It took the English host as by surprise, piercing hide cap, and even iron helm; and in the very surprise that made them instinctively look up—death came.

A dull groan as from many hearts boomed from the entrenchments on the Norman ear.

"Now," said William, "they must either use their shields to guard their heads—and their axes are useless—or while they smite with the axe they fall by the shaft. On now to the ramparts. I see my crown already resting on yonder standard!"

Yet despite all, the English bear up; the thickness of the palisades, the comparative smallness of the last enclosure, more easily therefore manned and maintained by the small force of the survivors, defy other weapons than those of the bow. Every Norman who attempts to scale the breastwork is slain on the instant, and his body cast forth under the hoofs of the baffled steeds. The sun sinks near and nearer towards the red horizon.

"Courage!" cries the voice of Harold, "hold but till nightfall, and ye are saved. Courage, and freedom!"

"Harold and Holy Crosse!" is the answer.

Still foiled, William again resolves to hazard his fatal stratagem. He marked that quarter of the enclosure which was most remote from the chief point of attack—most remote from the provident watch of Harold, whose cheering voice, ever and anon, he recognized amidst the hurtling clamor. In this quarter the palisades were the weakest, and the ground the least elevated; but it was guarded by men on whose skill with axe and shield Harold placed the firmest reliance—the Anglo-Danes of his old East-Anglian earldom. Thither, then, the Duke advanced a chosen column of his heavy-armed foot, tutored especially by himself in the rehearsals of his favorite *ruse*, and accompanied by a band of archers; while at the same time, he himself, with his brother Odo, headed a considerable company of knights under the son of the great Roger de Beaumont, to gain the contiguous level heights on which now stretches the little town of "Battle;" there to watch and to aid the manœuvre. The foot column advanced to the appointed spot, and after a short, close, and terrible conflict, succeeded in making a wide breach in the breast-works. But that temporary success only animates yet more the exertions of the beleaguered defenders, and swarming round the breach, and pouring through it, line after line of the foe drop beneath their axes. The column of the heavy-armed Normans fall back, down the slopes—they give way—they turn in disorder—they retreat—they fly; but the archers stand firm, midway on the descent—those archers seem an easy prey to the English—the temptation is irresistible. Long galled, and harassed, and maddened by the shafts, the Anglo-Danes rush forth at the heels of the Norman swordsmen, and sweeping down to exterminate the archers, the breach that they leave gapes wide.

"Forward," cries William, and he gallops towards the breach.

"Forward," cries Odo, "I see the hands of the holy saints in the air! Forward! it is the Dead that wheel our war-steeds round the living!"

On rush the Norman knights. But Harold is already in the breach, rallying around him hearts eager to replace the shattered breastworks.

'Close shields! Hold fast!" shouts his kingly voice.

Before him were the steeds of Bruse and Grantmesnil. At his breast their spears;—Haco holds over the breast the shield. Swinging aloft with both hands his axe, the spear of Grantmesnil is shivered in twain by the King's stroke. Cloven to the skull rolls the steed of Bruse. Knight and steed roll on the bloody sward.

But a blow from the sword of De Lacy has broken down the guardian shield of Haco. The son of Sweyn is stricken to his knee. With lifted blades and whirling maces the Norman knights charge through the breach.

"Look up, look up, and guard thy head," cries the fatal voice of Haco to the King.

At that cry the King raises his flashing eyes. Why halts his stride? Why drops the axe from his hand? As he raised his head, down came the hissing death shaft. It smote the lifted face; it crushed into the dauntless eyeball. He reeled, he staggered, he fell back several yards, at the foot of his gorgeous standard. With desperate hand he broke the head of the shaft, and left the barb, quivering in the anguish.

Gurth knelt over him.

"Fight on," gasped the King, "conceal my death! Holy Crosse! England to the rescue! woe—woe!"

Rallying himself a moment, he sprang to his feet, clenched his right hand, and fell once more,—a corpse.

At the same moment a simultaneous rush of horsemen towards the standard bore back a line of Saxons, and covered the body of the King with heaps of the slain.

His helmet cloven in two, his face all streaming with blood, but still calm in its ghastly hues, amidst the foremost of those slain, fell the fated Haco. He fell with his head on the breast of Harold, kissed the bloody cheek with bloody lips, groaned and died.

Inspired by despair with superhuman strength, Gurth, striding over the corpses of his kinsmen, opposed himself singly to the knights; and the entire strength of the English remnant, coming round him at the menaced danger to the standard, once more drove off the assailants.

But now all the enclosure was filled with the foe, the whole space seemed gay, in the darkening air, with banderols and banners. High through all, rose the club of the Conqueror; high, through all, shone the crozier of the Churchman. Not one Englishman fled; all now centring round the standard, they fell, slaughtering if slaughtered. Man by man, under the charmed banner, fell the lithsmen of Hilda. Then died the faithful Sæxwolf. Then died the gallant Godrith, redeeming, by the death of many a Norman, his young fantastic love of the Norman manners. Then died, last of such of the Kentmen as had won retreat from their scattered vanguard into the circle of closing slaughter,—the English-hearted Vebba.

Even still in that age, when the Teuton had yet in his veins the blood of Odin, the demi-god,—even still one man could delay the might of numbers. Through the crowd, the Normans beheld with admiring awe,—here, in the front of their horse, a single warrior, before whose axe spear shivered, helm drooped;—there, close by the standard, standing breast high among the slain, one still more formidable, and even amidst ruin unvanquished. The first fell at length under the mace of Roger de Montgommeri. So, unknown to the Norman poet (who hath preserved in his verse the deeds but not the name), fell, laughing in death, young Leofwine! Still by the enchanted standard towers the other; still the enchanted standard waves aloft, with its brave ensign of the solitary "Fighting Man" girded by the gems that had flashed in the crown of Odin.

"Thine be the honor of lowering that haughty flag," cried William, turning to one of his favorite and most famous knights, Robert de Tessin.

Overjoyed, the knight rushed forth, to fall by the axe of that stubborn defender.

"Sorcery," cried Fitzosborne, "sorcery. This is no man, but fiend."

"Spare him, spare the brave," cried in a breath Bruse, D'Aincourt and De Graville.

William turned round in wrath at the cry of mercy, and, spurring over all the corpses, with the sacred banner borne by Tonstain close behind him, so that it shadowed his helmet,—he came to the foot of the standard, and for one moment there was single battle between the Knight-Duke and the Saxon hero. Nor, even then, conquered by the Norman

sword, but exhausted by a hundred wounds, that brave chief fell,* and the falchion vainly pierced him, falling. So, last man at the standard, died Gurth.

The sun had set, the first star was in heaven, the "Fighting Man" was laid low, and on that spot where now, all forlorn and shattered, amidst stagnant water, stands the altar-stone of Battle Abbey, rose the glittering dragon that surmounted the consecrated banner of the Norman victor.

CHAPTER IX.

Close by his banner, amidst the piles of the dead, William the Conqueror pitched his pavilion, and sate at meat. And over all the plain, far and near, torches were moving like meteors on a march; for the Duke had permitted the Saxon women to search for the bodies of their lords. And as he sate, and talked, and laughed, there entered the tent two humble monks: their lowly mien, their dejected faces, their homely serge, in mournful contrast to the joy and the splendor of the Victory Feast.

They came to the Conqueror, and knelt.

"Rise up, sons of the Church," said William, mildly, "for sons of the Church are *we!* Deem not that we shall invade the rights of the religion which we have come to avenge. Nay, on this spot we have already sworn to build an abbey that shall be the proudest in the land, and where masses shall be sung evermore for the repose of the brave Normans who fell in this field, and for mine and my consort's soul."

"Doubtless," said Odo, sneering, "the holy men have heard already of this pious intent, and come to pray for cells in the future abbey."

"Not so," said Osgood, mournfully, and in barbarous Norman; "we have our own beloved convent at Waltham, endowed by the prince whom thine arms have defeated. We come to ask but to bury in our sacred cloisters the corpse of him so lately king over all England—our benefactor, Harold."

The Duke's brow fell.

"And see," said Ailred, eagerly, as he drew out a leathern pouch, "we have brought with us all the gold that our poor crypts contained, for we misdoubted this day," and he poured out the glittering pieces at the Conqueror's feet.

"No!" said William fiercely, "we take no gold for a traitor's body; no, not if Githa, the usurper's mother, offered us its weight in the shining metal; unburied be the Accursed of the Church, and let the birds of prey feed their young with his carcase!"

Two murmurs, distinct in tone and in meaning, were heard in that assembly; the one of approval from fierce mercenaries, insolent with triumph; the other of generous discontent and indignant amaze, from the large majority of Norman nobles.

But William's brow was still dark, and his eye still stern; for his policy confirmed his passions; and it was only by stigmatizing, as dishonored and accursed, the memory and cause of the dead King, that he could justify the sweeping spoliation of those who had fought against himself, and confiscate the lands to which his own Queens and warriors looked for their reward.

The murmurs had just died into a thrilling hush, when a woman, who had followed the monks unperceived and unheeded, passed with a swift and noiseless step to the Duke's footstool; and, without bending knee to the ground, said, in a voice, which, though low, was heard by all,—

"Norman, in the name of the women of England, I tell thee that thou darest not do this wrong to the hero who died in defence of their hearths and their children!"

Before she spoke she had thrown back her hood; her hair dishevelled, fell over her shoulders, glittering like gold, in the blaze of the banquet-lights; and that wondrous beauty, without parallel amidst the dames of England, shone like the vision of an accusing angel, on the eyes of the startled Duke, and the breathless knights. But twice in her life Edith beheld that awful man.

* Thus Wace,

"Guert (Gurth) vit Engleiz amenuisier,
Vi K'il n'i ont nul recovrier," etc.

"Gurth saw the English diminish, and that there was no hope to retrieve the day; the Duke pushed forth with such force, that he reached him, and struck him with great violence (*par grant air*). I know not if he died by the stroke, but it is said that it laid him low."

Once, when roused from her reverie of innocent love by the holiday pomp of his trumps and banners, the childlike maid stood at the foot of the grassy knoll; and once again, when in the hour of his triumph, and amidst the wrecks of England on the field of Sanguelac, with a soul surviving the crushed and broken heart, the faith of the lofty woman defended the Hero Dead.

There, with knee unbent, and form unquailing, with marble cheek, and haughty eye, she faced the Conqueror; and, as she ceased, his noble barons broke into bold applause.

"Who art thou?" said William, if not daunted at least amazed. "Methinks I have seen thy face before; thou art not Harald's wife or sister?"

"Dread lord," said Osgood; "she was the betrothed of Harold; but, as within the degrees of kin, the Church forbade their union, and they obeyed the Church."

Out from the banquet-throng stepped Mallet de Graville. "O my liege," said he, "thou hast promised me lands and earldom; instead of these gifts undeserved, bestow on me the right to bury and to honor the remains of Harold; to-day I took from him my life, let me give all I can in return—a grave!"

William paused, but the sentiment of the assembly, so clearly pronounced, and, it may be, his own better nature which, ere polluted by plotting craft, and hardened by despotic ire, was magnanimous and heroic, moved and won him. "Lady," said he, gently, "thou appealest not in vain to Norman knighthood: thy rebuke was just, and I repent me of a hasty impulse. Mallet de Graville, thy prayer is granted; to thy choice be consigned the place of burial, to thy care the funeral rites of him whose soul hath passed out of human judgment."

The feast was over; William the Conqueror slept on his couch, and round him slumbered his Norman knights, dreaming of baronies to come; and still the torches moved dismally to and fro the waste of death, and through the hush of night was heard near and far the wail of women.

Accompanied by the brothers of Waltham, and attended by link-bearers, Mallet De Graville was yet engaged in the search for the royal dead—and the search was vain. Deeper and stiller, the autumnal moon rose to its melancholy noon, and lent its ghastly aid to the glare of the redder lights. But, on leaving the pavilion, they had missed Edith; she had gone from them alone, and was lost in that dreadful wilderness. And Ailred said despondingly—

"Perchance we may already have seen the corpse we search for, and not recognized it; for the face may be mutilated with wounds. And therefore it is that Saxon wives and mothers haunt our battle-fields, discovering those they search by signs not known without the household." *

"Ay," said the Norman, "I comprehend thee, by the letter or device, in which, according to your customs, your warriors impress on their own forms some token of affection, or some fancied charm against ill."

"It is so," answered the monk; "wherefore I grieve that we have lost the guidance of the maid."

While thus conversing, they had retraced their steps, almost in despair, towards the Duke's pavilion.

"See," said De Graville, "how near yon lonely woman hath come to the tent of the Duke—yea, to the foot of the holy gonfanon, which supplanted 'the Fighting Man!' *Pardex*, my heart bleeds to see her striving to lift up the heavy dead!"

The monks neared the spot, and Osgood exclaimed in a voice almost joyful,—

"It is Edith the Fair! This way, the torches! hither, quick!"

The corpses had been flung in irreverent haste from either side of the gonfanon, to make room for the banner of the conquest, and the pavilion of the feast. Huddled together, they lay in that holy bed. And the woman silently, and by the help of no light save the moon, was intent on her search. She waved her hand impatiently as they approached, as if jealous of the dead: but as she had not sought, so neither did she oppose, their aid. Moaning low to herself, she desisted from her task, and knelt watching them, and shaking her head mournfully, as they removed helm after helm, and lowered

* The suggestions implied in the text, will probably be admitted as correct; when we read in the Saxon annals of the recognition of the dead by peculiar marks on their bodies; the obvious, or at least the most natural explanation of those signs, is to be found in the habit of puncturing the skin, mentioned by the Malmesbury chronicler.

the torches upon stern and livid brows. At length the lights fell red and full on the ghastly face of Haco—proud and sad as in life.

De Graville uttered an exclamation: "The King's nephew: be sure the King is near!"

A shudder went over the woman's form, and the moaning ceased.

They unhelmed another corpse; and the monks and the knight, after one glance, turned away sickened and awe-stricken at the sight: for the face was all defeatured and mangled with wounds; and nought could they recognize save the ravaged majesty of what had been man. But at the sight of that face a wild shriek broke from Edith's heart.

She started to her feet—put aside the monks with a wild and angry gesture, and bending over the face, sought with her long hair to wipe from it the clotted blood; then with convulsive fingers, she strove to loosen the buckler of the breast-mail. The knight knelt to assist her. "No, no," she gasped out. "He is mine—mine now!"

Her hands bled as the mail gave way to her efforts; the tunic beneath was all dabbled with blood. She rent the folds, and on the breast, just above the silenced heart, were punctured in the old Saxon letters, the word "EDITH;" and just below, in characters more fresh, the word "ENGLAND."

"See, see!" she cried in piercing accents; and clasping the dead in her arms, she kissed the lips, and called aloud, in words of the tenderest endearments, as if she addressed the living. All there knew then that the search was ended; all knew that the eyes of love had recognized the dead.

"Wed, wed," murmured the betrothed; "wed at last! O Harold, Harold! the words of the Vala were true—and Heaven is kind!" and laying her head gently on the breast of the dead, she smiled and died.

At the east end of the choir in the Abbey of Waltham, was long shown the tomb of the Last Saxon King, inscribed with the touching words—"Harold Infelix." But not under that stone, according to the chronicler who should best know the truth,* mouldered the dust of him in whose grave was buried an epoch in human annals.

"Let his corpse," said William the Norman, "let his corpse guard the coasts, which his life madly defended. Let the seas wail his dirge, and girdle his grave; and his spirit protect the land which hath passed to the Norman's sway."

And Mallet de Graville assented to the word of his chief, for his knightly heart turned into honor the latent taunt; and well he knew, that Harold could have chosen no burial spot so worthy his English spirit and his Roman end.

The tomb at Waltham would have excluded the faithful ashes of the betrothed, whose heart had broken on the bosom she had found; more gentle was the grave in the temple of Heaven, and hallowed by the bridal death-dirge of the everlasting sea.

So, in that sentiment of poetry and love, which made half the religion of a Norman knight, Mallet de Graville suffered death to unite those whom life had divided. In the holy burial-ground that encircled a small Saxon chapel, on the shore, and near the spot on which William had leapt to land, one grave received the betrothed; and the tomb of Waltham only honored an empty name.*

Eight centuries have rolled away, and where is the Norman now? or where is not the Saxon? The little urn that sufficed for the mighty lord† is despoiled of his very dust; but the tombless shade of the kingly freeman still guards the coasts, and rests upon the seas. In many a noiseless field, with Thoughts for Armies, your relics, O Saxon Heroes, have won back the victory from the bones of the Norman saints; and whenever, with fairer fates, Freedom opposes Force, and Justice, redeeming the old defeat, smites down the armed Frauds that would consecrate the wrong,—smile, O soul of our Saxon Harold, smile, appeased, on the Saxon's land!

* The contemporary Norman chronicler, William of Poitiers. See note (*r*), at the end.

* See note (*r*).

† "Rex magnus pravâ jacet hic Gulielmus in urnâ.—
Sufficit et magno parva Domus Domino."
From William the Conqueror's epitaph (ap-Gemiticen). His bones are said to have been disinterred some centuries after his death.

THE CAXTONS:

A FAMILY PICTURE.

(483)

THE CAXTONS.

THE CAXTONS.

PREFACE.

If it be the good fortune of this work to possess any interest for the Novel reader, that interest, perhaps, will be but little derived from the customary elements of fiction. The plot is extremely slight; the incidents are few, and, with the exception of those which involve the fate of Vivian, such as may be found in the records of ordinary life.

Regarded as a Novel, this attempt is an experiment somewhat apart from the previous works of the author; it is the first of his writings in which Humor has been employed less for the purpose of satire than in illustration of amiable characters;—it is the first, too, in which man has been viewed less in his active relations with the world, than in his repose at his own hearth:—in a word, the greater part of the canvas has been devoted to the completion of a simple Family Picture. And thus, in any appeal to the sympathies of the human heart, the common household affections occupy the place of those livelier or larger passions which usually (and not unjustly) arrogate the foreground in Romantic composition.

In the Hero whose autobiography connects the different characters and events of the work, it has been the Author's intention to imply the influences of Home upon the conduct and career of youth; and in the ambition which estranges Pisistratus for a time from the sedentary occupations in which the man of civilized life must usually serve his apprenticeship to Fortune or to Fame, it is not designed to describe the fever of Genius conscious of superior powers and aspiring to high destinies, but the natural tendencies of a fresh and buoyant mind, rather vigorous than contemplative, and in which the desire of action is but the symptom of health.

Pisistratus, in this respect (as he himself feels and implies), becomes the specimen or type of a class the numbers of which are daily increasing in the inevitable progress of modern civilization. He is one too many in the midst of the crowd: he is the representative of the exuberant energies of youth, turning, as with the instinct of nature for space and development, from the Old World to the New. That which may be called the interior meaning of the whole is sought to be completed by the inference that, whatever our wanderings, our happiness will always be found within a narrow compass, and amidst the objects more immediately within our reach;—but that we are seldom sensible of this truth (hackneyed though it be in the Schools of all Philosophies) till our researches have spread over a wider area. To insure the blessing of repose, we require a brisker excitement than a few turns up and down our room. Content is like that humor in the crystal, on which Claudian has lavished the wonder of a child and the fancies of a Poet—

"Vivis gemma tumescit aquis."

E. B. L.

October, 1849.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

"SIR—sir, it is a boy!"

"A boy," said my father, looking up from his book, and evidently much puzzled; "what is a boy?"

Now my father did not mean by that interrogatory to challenge philosophical inquiry, nor to demand of the honest but unenlightened woman who had just rushed into his study, a solution of that mystery, physiological and psychological, which has puzzled so many curious sages, and lies still involved in the question, "What is man?" For, as we need not look further than Dr. Johnson's Dictionary to know that a boy is "a male child"—*i. e.*, the male young of man; so he who would go to the depth of things, and know scientifically what is a boy, must be able to ascertain "what is a man?" But, for aught I know, my father may have been satisfied with Buffon on that score, or he may have sided with Monboddo. He may have agreed with Bishop Berkeley—he may have contented himself with Professor Combe—he may have regarded the genus spiritually, like Zeno, or materially like Epicurus. Grant that boy is the male young of man, and he would have had plenty of definitions to choose from. He might have said, "Man is a stomach—*ergo*, boy a male young stomach. Man is a brain—boy a male young brain. Man is a bundle of habits—boy a male young bundle of habits. Man is a machine—boy a male young machine. Man is a tail-less monkey—boy a male young tail-less monkey. Man is a combination of gases—boy a male young combination of gases. Man is an appearance—boy a male young appearance," etc. etc., and etcetera, *ad infinitum!* And if none of these definitions had entirely satisfied my father, I am perfectly persuaded that he would never have come to Mrs. Primmins for a new one.

But it so happened that my father was at that moment engaged in the important consideration whether the Iliad was written by one Homer—or was rather a collection of sundry ballads, done into Greek by divers hands, and finally selected, compiled, and reduced into a whole by a Committee of Taste, under the elegant old tyrant Pisistratus; and the sudden affirmation "It is a boy," did not seem to him pertinent to the thread of the discussion. Therefore he asked, "What is a boy?"—vaguely, and, as it were, taken by surprise.

"Lord, sir!" said Mrs. Primmins, "what is a boy? Why, the baby!"

"The baby!" repeated my father, rising. "What, you don't mean to say that Mrs. Caxton is—eh—?"

"Yes I do," said Mrs. Primmins, dropping a curtsey; "and as fine a little rogue as ever I set eyes upon."

"Poor, dear woman!" said my father with great compassion. "So soon, too—so rapidly!" he resumed in a tone of musing surprise. "Why, it is but the other day we were married!"

"Bless my heart, sir," said Mrs. Primmins, much scandalized, "it is ten months and more."

"Ten months!" said my father with a sigh. "Ten months! and I have not finished fifty pages of my refutation of Wolfe's monstrous theory! In ten months a child!

—and I'll be bound complete—hands, feet, eyes, ears, and nose!—and not like this poor Infant of Mind (and my father pathetically placed his hand on the treatise)—of which nothing is formed and shaped—not even the first joint of the little finger! Why, my wife is a precious woman! Well, keep her quiet. Heaven preserve her, and send me strength—to support this blessing!"

"But your honor will look at the baby?—come, sir!" and Mrs. Primmins laid hold of my father's sleeve coaxingly.

"Look at it—to be sure," said my father kindly; "look at it, certainly; it is but fair to poor Mrs. Caxton; after taking so much trouble, dear soul!"

Therewith my father, drawing his dressing-robe round him in more stately folds, followed Mrs. Primmins up-stairs into a room very carefully darkened.

"How are you, my dear?" said my father with compassionate tenderness, as he groped his way to the bed.

A faint voice muttered, "Better now, and so happy!" And, at the same moment, Mrs. Primmins pulled my father away, lifted a coverlid from a small cradle, and, holding a candle within an inch of an undeveloped nose, cried emphatically, "There—bless it!"

"Of course, ma'am, I bless it," said my father, rather peevishly. "It is my duty to bless it; BLESS IT! And this, then, is the way we come into the world!—red, very red,—blushing for all the follies we are destined to commit."

My father sat down on the nurse's chair, the women grouped round him. He continued to gaze on the contents of the cradle, and at length said musingly:—"And Homer was once like this!"

At this moment—and no wonder, considering the propinquity of the candle to his visual organs—Homer's infant likeness commenced the first untutored melodies of nature.

"Homer improved greatly in singing as he grew older," observed Mr. Squills, the accoucheur, who was engaged in some mysteries in a corner of the room.

My father stopped his ears:—"Little things can make a great noise," said he philosophically; "and the smaller the thing the greater noise it can make."

So saying, he crept on tiptoe to the bed, and, clasping the pale hand held out to him, whispered some words that no doubt charmed and soothed the ear that heard them, for that pale hand was suddenly drawn from his own and thrown tenderly round his neck. The sound of a gentle kiss was heard through the stillness.

"Mr. Caxton, sir," cried Mr. Squills, in rebuke, "you agitate my patient—you must retire."

My father raised his mild face, looked round apologetically, brushed his eyes with the back of his hand, stole to the door, and vanished.

"I think," said a kind gossip seated at the other side of my mother's bed, "I think, my dear, that Mr. Caxton might have shown more joy,—more natural feeling, I may say,—at the sight of the baby: and SUCH a baby! But all men are just the same, my dear—brutes—all brutes, depend upon it."

"Poor Austin!" sighed my mother feebly—"how little you understand him!"

"And now I shall clear the room," said Mr. Squills. "Go to sleep, Mrs. Caxton."

"Mr. Squills," exclaimed my mother, and the bed-curtains trembled, "pray see that Mr. Caxton does not set himself on fire;—and, Mr. Squills, tell him not to be vexed and miss me,—I shall be down very soon—sha'n't I?"

"If you keep youself easy, you will, ma'am."

"Pray, say so;—and, Primmins,"—

"Yes, ma'am."

"Every one, I fear, is neglecting your master. Be sure,—(and my mother's lips approached close to Mrs. Primmins' ear,)—be sure that you—air his nightcap yourself."

"Tender creatures those women," soliloquized Mr. Squills, as, after clearing the room of all present, save Mrs. Primmins and the nurse, he took his way towards my father's study. Encountering the footman in the passage,—"John," said he, "take supper into your master's room, and make us some punch, will you?—stiffish!"

CHAPTER II.

"MR. CAXTON, how on earth did you ever come to marry?" asked Mr. Squills, abruptly, with his feet on the hob, while stirring up his punch.

That was a home question, which many men might reasonably resent; but my father scarcely knew what resentment was.

"Squills," said he, turning round from his books, and laying one finger on the surgeon's arm confidentially,—"Squills," said he, "I myself should be glad to know how I came to be married."

Mr. Squills was a jovial good-hearted man —stout, fat, and with fine teeth, that made his laugh pleasant to look at as well as to hear. Mr. Squills, moreover, was a bit of a philosopher in his way;—studied human nature in curing its diseases;—and was accustomed to say, that Mr. Caxton was a better book in himself than all he had in his library. Mr. Squills laughed and rubbed his hands.

My father resumed thoughtfully, and in the tone of one who moralizes—

"There are three great events in life, sir —birth, marriage, and death. None know how they are born, few know how they die. But I suspect that many can account for the intermediate phenomenon—I cannot."

"It was not for money,—it must have been for love," observed Mr. Squills; "and your young wife is as pretty as she is good."

"Ha!" said my father, "I remember."

"Do you, sir?" exclaimed Squills, highly amused. "How was it?"

My father, as was often the case with him, protracted his reply, and then seemed rather to commune with himself than to answer Mr. Squills.

"The kindest, the best of men," he murmured—"*Abyssus Eruditionis:* and to think that he bestowed on me the only fortune he had to leave, instead of his own flesh and blood, Jack and Kitty. All at least that I could grasp *deficiente manu*, of his Latin, his Greek, his Orientals. What do I not owe to him!"

"To whom?" asked Squills. "Good Lord, what's the man talking about?"

"Yes, sir," said my father, rousing himself, "such was Giles Tibbets, M.A., *Sol Scientiarum*, tutor to the humble scholar you address, and father to poor Kitty. He left me his Elzevirs; he left me also his orphan daughter."

"Oh! as a wife—"

"No, as a ward. So she came to live in my house. I am sure there was no harm in it. But my neighbors said there was, and the widow Weltraum told me the girl's character would suffer. What could I do?—Oh yes, I recollect all now! I married her, that my old friend's child might have a roof to her head, and come to no harm. You see I was forced to do her that injury; for, after all, poor young creature, it was a sad lot for her. A dull book-worm like me—*cochleæ vitam agens*, Mr. Squills—leading the life of a snail. But my shell was all I could offer to my poor friend's orphan."

"Mr. Caxton, I honor you," said Squills emphatically, jumping up, and spilling half a tumblerful of scalding punch over my father's legs. "You have a heart, sir! and I understand why your wife loves you. You seem a cold man; but you have tears in your eyes at this moment."

"I dare say I have," said my father, rubbing his shins: "it was boiling!"

"And your son will be a comfort to you both," said Mr. Squills, reseating himself, and, in his friendly emotion, wholly abstracted from all consciousness of the suffering he had inflicted. "He will be a dove of peace to your ark."

"I don't doubt it," said my father ruefully; "only those doves, when they are small, are a very noisy sort of birds—*non talium avium cantus somnum reduceat.* However, it might have been worse. Leda had twins."

"So had Mrs. Barnabas last week," rejoined the accoucheur. "Who knows what may be in store for you yet? Here's a health to Master Caxton, and lots of brothers and sisters to him!"

"Brothers and sisters! I am sure Mrs. Caxton will never think of such a thing, sir," said my father almost indignantly. "She's much too good a wife to behave so. Once, in a way, it is all very well; but twice —and as it is, not a paper in its place, nor a pen mended the last three days: I, too, who can only write '*cuspide duriusculâ*'—and the Baker coming twice to me for his bill too!

The Ilithyiæ are troublesome deities, Mr. Squills."

"Who are the Ilithyiæ?" asked the accoucheur.

"You ought to know," answered my father smiling. "The female dæmons who presided over the Neogilos or New-born. They take the name from Juno. See Homer, book XI. By the by, will my Neogilos be brought up like Hector or Astyanax—*videlicet*, nourished by its mother or by a nurse?"

"Which do you prefer, Mr. Caxton?" asked Mr. Squills, breaking the sugar in his tumbler. "In this I always deem it my duty to consult the wishes of the gentleman."

"A nurse by all means, then," said my father. "And let her carry him *upo kolpo*, next to her bosom. I know all that has been said about mothers nursing their own infants, Mr. Squills; but poor Kitty is so sensitive, that I think a stout healthy peasant woman will be the best for the boy's future nerves, and his mother's nerves, present and future too. Heigh-ho!—I shall miss the dear woman very much; when will she be up, Mr. Squills?"

"Oh, in less than a fortnight!"

"And then the Neogilos shall go to school! *u po kolpo*—the nurse with him, and all will be right again," said my father, with a look of sly mysterious humor, which was peculiar to him.

"School! when he's just born?"

"Can't begin too soon," said my father positively; "that's Helvetius' opinion, and it is mine too!"

CHAPTER III.

THAT I was a very wonderful child, I take for granted; but, nevertheless, it was not of my own knowledge that I came into possession of the circumstances set down in my former chapters. But my father's conduct on the occasion of my birth made a notable impression upon all who witnessed it; and Mr. Squills and Mrs. Primmins have related the facts to me sufficiently often, to make me as well acquainted with them as those worthy witnesses themselves. I fancy I see my father before me, in his dark-gray dressing-gown, and with his odd, half sly, half innocent twitch of the mouth, and peculiar puzzling look, from two quiet, abstracted, indolently handsome eyes, at the moment he agreed with Helvetius on the propriety of sending me to school as soon as I was born. Nobody knew exactly what to make of my father—his wife excepted. The people of Abdera sent for Hippocrates to cure the supposed insanity of Democritus, "who at that time," saith Hippocrates drily, "was seriously engaged in Philosophy." That same people of Abdera would certainly have found very alarming symptoms of madness in my poor father; for, like Democritus, "he esteemed as nothing the things, great or small, in which the rest of the world were employed." Accordingly, some set him down as a sage, some as a fool. The neighboring clergy respected him as a scholar, "breathing libraries;" the ladies despised him as an absent pedant, who had no more gallantry than a stock or a stone. The poor loved him for his charities, but laughed at him as a weak sort of man, easily taken in. Yet the squires and farmers found that, in their own matters of rural business, he had always a fund of curious information to impart; and whoever, young or old, gentle or simple, learned or ignorant, asked his advice, it was given with not more humility than wisdom. In the common affairs of life, he seemed incapable of acting for himself; he left all to my mother; or, if taken unawares, was pretty sure to be the dupe. But in those very affairs—if *another* consulted him—his eye brightened, his brow cleared, the desire of serving made him a new being: cautious, profound, practical. Too lazy or too languid where only his own interests were at stake—touch his benevolence, and all the wheels of the clockwork felt the impetus of the master-spring. No wonder that, to others, the nut of such a character was hard to crack! But, in the eyes of my poor mother, Augustine (familiarly Austin) Caxton was the best and the greatest of human beings; and she ought to have known him well, for she studied him with her whole heart, knew every trick of his face, and, nine times out of ten, divined what he was going to say, before he opened his lips. Yet cer-

tainly there were deeps in his nature which the plummet of her tender woman's wit had never sounded: and, certainly, it sometimes happened that, even in his most domestic colloquialisms, my mother was in doubt whether he was the simple straightforward person he was mostly taken for. There was, indeed, a kind of suppressed subtle irony about him, too unsubstantial to be popularly called humor, but dimly implying some sort of jest, which he kept all to himself; and this was only noticeable when he said something that sounded very grave, or appeared to the grave very silly and irrational.

That I did not go to school—at least to what Mr. Squills understood by the word school—quite so soon as intended, I need scarcely observe. In fact, my mother managed so well—my nursery, by means of double doors, was so placed out of hearing—that my father, for the most part, was privileged, if he pleased, to forget my existence. He was once vaguely recalled to it on the occasion of my christening. Now, my father was a shy man, and he particularly hated all ceremonies and public spectacles. He became uneasily aware that a great ceremony, in which he might be called upon to play a prominent part, was at hand. Abstracted as he was, and conveniently deaf at times, he had heard such significant whispers about "taking advantage of the bishop's being in the neighborhood," and "twelve new jelly-glasses being absolutely wanted," as to assure him that some deadly festivity was in the wind. And when the question of godmother and godfather was fairly put to him, coupled with the remark that this was a fine opportunity to return the civilities of the neighborhood, he felt that a strong effort at escape was the only thing left. Accordingly, having, seemingly without listening, heard the day fixed, and seen, as they thought, without observing, the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room uncovered (my dear mother was the tidiest woman in the world), my father suddenly discovered that there was to be a great book sale, twenty miles off, which would last four days, and attend it he must. My mother sighed; but she never contradicted my father, even when he was wrong, as he certainly was in this case. She only dropped a timid intimation that she feared "It would look odd, and the world might misconstrue my father's absence—had not she better put off the christening?"

"My dear," answered my father, "it will be *my* duty, by and by, to christen the boy—a duty not done in a day. At present, I have no doubt that the bishop will do very well without me. Let the day stand, or, if you put it off, upon my word and honor I believe that the wicked auctioneer will put off the book sale also. Of one thing I am quite sure, that the sale and the christening will take place at the same time."

There was no getting over this; but I am certain my dear mother had much less heart than before in uncovering the chintz chairs in the best drawing-room. Five years later this would not have happened. My mother would have kissed my father, and said "Stay," and he would have stayed. But she was then very young and timid; and he, wild man, not of the woods, but the cloisters, nor yet civilized into the tractabilities of home. In short, the post-chaise was ordered and the carpet-bag packed.

"My love," said my mother, the night before this Hegira, looking up from her work—"my love, there is one thing you have quite forgot to settle—I beg pardon for disturbing you, but it is important!—baby's name; shan't we call him Augustine?"

"Augustine," said my father, dreamily; "why, that name's mine."

"And you would like your boy's to be the same?"

"No," said my father, rousing himself. "Nobody would know which was which. I should catch myself learning the Latin accidence or playing at marbles. I should never know my own identity, and Mrs. Primmins would be giving me pap."

My mother smiled; and putting her hand, which was a very pretty one, on my father's shoulder, and looking at him tenderly, she said, "There's no fear of mistaking you for any other, even your son, dearest. Still, if you prefer another name, what shall it be?"

"Samuel," said my father. "Dr. Parr's name is Samuel."

"La, my love! Samuel is the ugliest name—"

My father did not hear the exclamation, he was again deep in his book; presently he started up:—"Barnes says Homer is Solomon. Read Omeros backwards, in the Hebrew manner—"

"Yes, my love," interrupted my mother. "But baby's christian name?"

"Omeros—Soremo—Solemo—Solomo!"

"Solomo! shocking," said my mother.

"Shocking, indeed," echoed my father; "an outrage to common sense." Then, after glancing again over his books, he broke out musingly—"But, after all, it is nonsense to suppose that Homer was not settled till *his* time."

"Whose?" asked my mother, mechanically.

My father lifted up his finger.

My mother continued, after a short pause, "Arthur is a pretty name. Then there's William—Henry—Charles—Robert. What shall it be, love?"

"Pisistratus?" said my father (who had hung fire till then), in a tone of contempt—"Pisistratus, indeed!"

"Pisistratus! a very fine name," said my mother joyfully—"Pisistratus Caxton. Thank you, my love. Pisistratus it shall be."

"Do you contradict me? Do you side with Wolfe and Heyne, and that pragmatical fellow, Vico? Do you mean to say that the Rhapsodists—"

"No, indeed," interrupted my mother. "My dear, you frighten me."

My father sighed, and threw himself back in his chair. My mother took courage and resumed.

"Pisistratus is a long name too! Still one could call him Sisty."

"Siste, Viator," muttered my father; "that's trite!"

"No, Sisty by itself—short. Thank you, my dear."

Four days afterwards, on his return from the book sale, to my father's inexpressible bewilderment, he was informed that "Pisistratus was growing the very image of him."

When at length the good man was made thoroughly aware of the fact, that his son and heir boasted a name so memorable in history as that borne by the enslaver of Athens, and the disputed arranger of Homer—and it was asserted to be a name that he himself had suggested—he was as angry as so mild a man could be. "But it is infamous!" he exclaimed. "Pisistratus christened! Pisistratus! who lived six hundred years before Christ was born. Good heavens, madam! you have made me the father of an Anachronism."

My mother burst into tears. But the evil was irremediable. An anachronism I was, and an anachronism I must continue to the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

"Of course, sir, you will begin soon to educate your son yourself?" said Mr. Squills.

"Of course, sir," said my father, "you have read Martinus Scriblerus?"

"I don't understand you, Mr. Caxton."

"Then you have *not* read Martinus Scriblerus, Mr. Squills!"

"Consider that I have read it, and what then?"

"Why then, Squills," said my father familiarly, "you would know, that though a scholar is often a fool, he is never a fool so supreme, so superlative, as when he is defacing the first unsullied page of the human history, by entering into it the commonplaces of his own pedantry. A scholar, sir—at least one like me—is of all persons the most unfit to teach young children. A mother, sir—a simple, natural, loving mother—is the infant's true guide to knowledge."

"Egad, Mr. Caxton, in spite of Helvetius, whom you quoted the night the boy was born—egad, I believe you are right."

"I am sure of it," said my father; "at least as sure as a poor mortal can be of anything. I agree with Helvetius, the child should be educated from its birth; but how?—there is the rub: send him to school forthwith! Certainly, he is at school already with the two great teachers, Nature and Love. Observe, that childhood and genius have the same master-organ in common—inquisitiveness. Let childhood have its way, and as it began where genius begins, it may find what genius finds. A certain Greek writer tells us of some man, who, in order to save his bees a troublesome flight to Hymettus, cut

their wings, and placed before them the finest flowers he could select. The poor bees made no honey. Now, sir, if I were to teach my boy I should be cutting his wings, and giving him the flowers he should find himself. Let us leave Nature alone for the present, and Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother."

Therewith my father pointed to his heir sprawling on the grass, and plucking daisies on the lawn; while the young mother's voice rose merrily, laughing at the child's glee.

"I shall make but a poor bill out of your nursery, I see," said Mr. Squills.

Agreeably to these doctrines, strange in so learned a father, I thrived and flourished, and learned to spell, and make pot-hooks, under the joint care of my mother and Dame Primmins. This last was one of an old race fast dying away—the race of old faithful servants—the race of old tale-telling nurses. She had reared my mother before me; but her affection put out new flowers for the new generation. She was a Devonshire woman—and Devonshire women, especially those who have passed their youth near the seacoast, are generally superstitious. She had a wonderful budget of fables. Before I was six years old, I was erudite in that primitive literature, in which the legends of all nations are traced to a common fountain—*Puss in Boots*, *Tom Thumb*, *Fortunio*, *Fortunatus*, *Jack the Giant Killer*,—tales like proverbs, equally familiar, under different versions, to the infant worshippers of Budh and the hardier children of Thor. I may say, without vanity, that in an examination in those venerable classics, I could have taken honors!

My dear mother had some little misgivings as to the solid benefit to be derived from such fantastic erudition, and timidly consulted my father thereon.

"My love," answered my father, in that tone of voice which always puzzled even my mother, to be sure whether he was in jest or earnest—"in all these fables, certain philosophers could easily discover symbolical significations of the highest morality. I have myself written a treatise to prove that *Puss in Boots* is an allegory upon the progress of the human understanding, having its origin in the mystical schools of the Egyptian priests, and evidently an illustration of the worship rendered at Thebes and Memphis to those feline quadrupeds, of which they make both religious symbols and elaborate mummies."

"My dear Austin," said my mother, opening her blue eyes, "you don't think that Sisty will discover all those fine things in *Puss in Boots!*"

"My dear Kitty," answered my father, "you don't think, when you were good enough to take up with me, that you found in me all the fine things I have learned from books. You knew me only as a harmless creature, who was happy enough to please your fancy. By and by you discovered that I was no worse for all the quartos that have transmigrated into ideas within me—ideas that are mysteries even to myself. If Sisty, as you call the child (plague on that unlucky anachronism! which you do well to abbreviate into a dissyllable), if Sisty can't discover all the wisdom of Egypt in *Puss in Boots*, what then? *Puss in Boots* is harmless, and it pleases his fancy. All that wakes curiosity is wisdom, if innocent—all that pleases the fancy now, turns hereafter to love or to knowledge. And so, my dear, go back to the nursery."

But I should wrong thee, O best of fathers! if I suffered the reader to suppose, that because thou didst seem so indifferent to my birth, and so careless as to my early teaching, therefore thou wert, at heart, indifferent to thy troublesome Neogilos. As I grew older, I became more sensibly aware that a father's eye was upon me. I distinctly remember one incident, that seems to me, in looking back, a crisis in my infant life, as the first tangible link between my own heart and that calm great soul.

My father was seated on the lawn before the house, his straw hat over his eyes (it was summer), and his book on his lap. Suddenly a beautiful delf blue-and-white flower-pot, which had been set on the window-sill of an upper story, fell to the ground with a crash, and the fragments spluttered up round my father's legs. Sublime in his studies as Archimedes in the siege, he continued to read; *Impavidum ferient ruinæ!*

"Dear, dear!" cried my mother, who was at work in the porch, "my poor flower-pot

that I had prized so much! Who could have done this? Primmins, Primmins!"

Mrs. Primmins popped her head out of the fatal window, nodded to the summons, and came down in a trice, pale and breathless.

"Oh!" said my mother, mournfully, "I would rather have lost all the plants in the greenhouse in the great blight last May,—I would rather the best tea-set were broken! The poor geranium I reared myself, and the dear, dear flower-pot which Mr. Caxton bought for me my last birthday! That naughty child must have done this!"

Mrs. Primmins was dreadfully afraid of my father—why, I know not, except that very talkative social persons are usually afraid of very silent shy ones. She cast a hasty glance at her master, who was beginning to evince signs of attention, and cried promptly, "No, ma'am, it was not the dear boy, bless his flesh, it was I!"

"You? how could you be so careless? and you knew how I prized them both. O Primmins!"

Primmins began to sob.

"Don't tell fibs, nursey," said a small shrill voice; and Master Sisty (coming out of the house as bold as brass) continued rapidly—"don't scold Primmins, mamma: it was I who pushed out the flower-pot."

"Hush!" said nurse, more frightened than ever, and looking aghast towards my father, who had very deliberately taken off his hat, and was regarding the scene with serious eyes wide awake.

"Hush! And if he did break it, ma'am, it was quite an accident; he was standing so, and he never meant it. Did you, master Sisty? Speak! (this in a whisper) or Pa will be so angry."

"Well," said my mother, "I suppose it was an accident; take care in future, my child. You are sorry, I see, to have grieved me. There's a kiss; don't fret."

"No, mamma, you must not kiss me; I don't deserve it. I pushed out the flower-pot on purpose."

"Ha! and why?" said my father, walking up.

Mrs. Primmins trembled like a leaf.

"For fun!" said I, hanging my head—"just to see how you'd look, papa; and that's the truth of it. Now beat me, do beat me!"

My father threw his book fifty yards off, stooped down, and caught me to his breast. "Boy," he said, "you have done wrong: you shall repair it by remembering all your life that your father blessed God for giving him a son who spoke truth in spite of fear! Oh! Mrs. Primmins, the next fable of this kind you try to teach him, and we part for ever!"

From that time I first date the hour when I felt that I loved my father, and knew that he loved me; from that time too, he began to *converse* with me. He would no longer, if he met me in the garden, pass by with a smile and nod; he would stop, put his book in his pocket, and though his talk was often above my comprehension, still somehow I felt happier and better, and less of an infant, when I thought over it, and tried to puzzle out the meaning; for he had a way of suggesting, not teaching—putting things into my head, and then leaving them to work out their own problems. I remember a special instance with respect to that same flower-pot and geranium. Mr. Squills, who was a bachelor, and well to do in the world, often made me little presents. Not long after the event I have narrated he gave me one far exceeding in value those usually bestowed on children,—it was a beautiful large domino-box in cut ivory, painted and gilt. This domino-box was my delight. I was never weary of playing at dominoes with Mrs. Primmins, and I slept with the box under my pillow.

"Ah!" said my father one day when he found me ranging the ivory parallelograms in the parlor, "ah! you like that better than all your playthings, eh?"

"O yes, papa."

"You would be very sorry if your mamma were to throw that box out of the window, and break it for fun." I looked beseechingly at my father, and made no answer.

"But perhaps you would be very glad," he resumed, "if suddenly one of those good fairies you read of could change the domino-box into a beautiful geranium in a beautiful blue-and-white flower-pot, and you could have the pleasure of putting it on your mamma's window-sill."

"Indeed I would!" said I, half crying.

"My dear boy, I believe you; but good wishes don't mend bad actions—good actions mend bad actions."

So saying, he shut the door and went out. I cannot tell you how puzzled I was to make out what my father meant by his aphorism. But I know that I played at dominoes no more that day. The next morning my father found me seated by myself under a tree in the garden; he paused and looked at me with his grave bright eyes very steadily.

"My boy," said he, "I am going to walk to —— (a town about two miles off), will you come? and, by the by, fetch your domino-box: I should like to show it to a person there." I ran in for the box, and, not a little proud of walking with my father upon the high-road, we set out.

"Papa," said I by the way, "there are no fairies now."

"What then, my child?"

"Why—how then can my domino-box be changed into a geranium and a blue-and-white flower-pot?"

"My dear," said my father, leaning his hand on my shoulder, "everybody who is in earnest to be good, carries two fairies about with him—one here," and he touched my heart; "and one here," and he touched my forehead.

"I don't understand, papa."

"I can wait till you do, Pisistratus! What a name!"

My father stopped at a nursery gardener's, and, after looking over the flowers, paused before a large double geranium. "Ah, this is finer than that which your mamma was so fond of. What is the cost, sir?"

"Only 7s. 6d.," said the gardener.

My father buttoned up his pocket. "I can't afford it to-day," said he, gently, and we walked out.

On entering the town, we stopped again at a china ware-house. "Have you a flower-pot like that I bought some months ago? Ah, here is one, marked 3s. 6d. Yes, that is the price. Well, when your mamma's birthday comes again, we must buy her another. That is some months to wait. And we can wait, Master Sisty. For truth, that blooms all the year round, is better than a poor geranium; and a word that is never broken, is better than a piece of delf."

My head, which had drooped before, rose again; but the rush of joy at my heart almost stifled me.

"I have called to pay your little bill," said my father, entering the shop of one of those fancy stationers common in country towns, and who sell all kinds of pretty toys and nick-nacks. "And by the way," he added, as the smiling shopman looked over his books for the entry, "I think my little boy here can show you a much handsomer specimen of French workmanship than that work-box which you enticed Mrs. Caxton into raffling for, last winter. Show your domino-box, my dear."

I produced my treasure, and the shopman was liberal in his commendations. "It is always well, my boy, to know what a thing is worth, in case one wishes to part with it. If my young gentleman gets tired of his plaything, what will you give him for it?"

"Why, sir," said the shopman, "I fear we could not afford to give more that eighteen shillings for it, unless the young gentleman took some of these pretty things in exchange."

"Eighteen shillings?" said my father; "you would give *that* sum. Well, my boy, whenever you do grow tired of your box, you have my leave to sell it."

My father paid his bill and went out. I lingered behind a few moments, and joined him at the end of the street.

"Papa, papa!" I cried, clapping my hands, "we can buy the geranium—we can buy the flower-pot." And I pulled a handful of silver from my pockets.

"Did I not say right?" said my father, passing his handkerchief over his eyes—"You have found the two fairies!"

Oh! how proud, how overjoyed I was, when, after placing vase and flower on the window-sill, I plucked my mother by the gown, and made her follow me to the spot.

"It is his doing, and his money!" said my father; "good actions have mended the bad."

"What!" cried my mother, when she had learned all; "and your poor domino-box that you were so fond of. We will go back

to-morrow, and buy it back, if it costs us double."

"Shall we buy it back, Pisistratus?" asked my father.

"Oh no—no—no! It would spoil all," I cried, burying my face on my father's breast.

"My wife," said my father, solemnly, "this is my first lesson to our child—the sanctity and the happiness of self-sacrifice—undo not what it should teach to his dying day."

CHAPTER V.

When I was between my seventh and my eighth year, a change came over me, which may perhaps be familiar to the notice of those parents who boast the anxious blessing of an only child. The ordinary vivacity of childhood forsook me; I became quiet, sedate, and thoughtful. The absence of playfellows of my own age, the companionship of mature minds alternated only by complete solitude, gave something precocious, whether to my imagination or my reason. The wild fables muttered to me by the old nurse in the summer twilight, or over the winter's hearth—the effort made by my struggling intellect to comprehend the grave, sweet wisdom of my father's suggested lessons—tended to feed a passion for reverie, in which all my faculties strained and struggled, as in the dreams that come when sleep is nearest waking. I had learned to read with ease, and to write with some fluency, and I already began to imitate, to reproduce. Strange tales, akin to those I had gleaned from fairyland—rude songs, modelled from such verse-books as fell into my hands, began to mar the contents of marble-covered pages, designed for the less ambitious purposes of round text and multiplication.

My mind was yet more disturbed by the intensity of my home affections. My love for both my parents had in it something morbid and painful. I often wept to think how little I could do for those I loved so well. My fondest fancies built up imaginary difficulties for them, which my arm was to smoothe. These feelings, thus cherished, made my nerves over-susceptible and acute. Nature began to affect me powerfully; and from that affection rose a restless curiosity to analyze the charms that so mysteriously moved me to joy or awe, to smiles or tears. I got my father to explain to me the elements of astronomy; I extracted from Squills, who was an ardent botanist, some of the mysteries in the life of flowers. But music became my darling passion. My mother (though the daughter of a great scholar—a scholar at whose name my father raised his hat if it happened to be on his head) possessed, I must own it fairly, less book-learning than many a humble tradesman's daughter can boast in this more enlightened generation; but she had some natural gifts which had ripened, Heaven knows how! into womanly accomplishments. She drew with some elegance, and painted flowers to exquisite perfection. She played on more than one instrument with more than boarding-school skill; and though she sang in no language but her own, few could hear her sweet voice without being deeply touched. Her music, her songs, had a wondrous effect on me. Thus, altogether, a kind of dreamy yet delightful melancholy seized upon my whole being; and this was the more remarkable, because contrary to my early temperament, which was bold, active, and hilarious. The change in my character began to act upon my form. From a robust and vigorous infant, I grew into a pale and slender boy. I began to ail and mope. Mr. Squills was called in.

"Tonics!" said Mr. Squills; "and don't let him sit over his book. Send him out in the air—make him play. Come here, my boy—these organs are growing too large;" and Mr. Squills, who was a phrenologist, placed his hand on my forehead. "Gad, sir, here's an ideality for you; and, bless my soul, what a constructiveness!"

My father pushed aside his papers, and walked to and fro the room with his hands behind him; but he did not say a word till Mr. Squills was gone.

"My dear," then said he to my mother, on whose breast I was leaning my aching ideality—"my dear, Pisistratus must go to school in good earnest."

"Bless me, Austin!—at his age?"

"He is nearly eight years old."

"But he is so forward."

"It is for that reason he must go to school."

"I don't quite understand you, my love. I know he is getting past me; but you who are so clever——"

My father took my mother's hand—"We can teach him nothing now, Kitty. We send him to school to be taught——"

"By some schoolmaster who knows much less than you do——"

"By little schoolboys, who will make him a boy again," said my father, almost sadly. "My dear, you remember that, when our Kentish gardener planted those filbert-trees, and when they were in their third year, and you began to calculate on what they would bring in, you went out one morning, and found he had cut them down to the ground. You were vexed, and asked why. What did the gardener say? 'To prevent their bearing too soon.' There is no want of fruitfulness here—put back the hour of produce that the plant may last."

"Let me go to school," said I, lifting my languid head, and smiling on my father. I understood him at once, and it was as if the voice of my life itself answered him.

CHAPTER VI.

A YEAR after the resolution thus come to, I was at home for the holidays.

"I hope," said my mother, "that they are doing Sisty justice. I do think he is not nearly so quick a child as he was before he went to school. I wish you would examine him, Austin."

"I have examined him, my dear. It is just as I expected; and I am quite satisfied."

"What! you really think he has come on?" said my mother, joyfully.

"He does not care a button for botany now," said Mr. Squills.

"And he used to be so fond of music, dear boy!" observed my mother, with a sigh. "Good gracious, what noise is that?"

"Your son's pop-gun against the window," said my father. "It is lucky it is only the window; it would have made a less deafening noise, though, if it had been Mr. Squills' head, as it was yesterday morning."

"The left ear," observed Squills; "and a very sharp blow it was, too. Yet you are satisfied, Mr. Caxton?"

"Yes; I think the boy is now as great a blockhead as most boys of his age are," observed my father with great complacency.

"Dear me, Austin—a great blockhead!"

"What else did he go to school for?" asked my father. And observing a certain dismay in the face of his female audience, and a certain surprise in that of his male, he rose and stood on the hearth, with one hand in his waistcoat, as was his wont when about to philosophize in more detail than was usual to him.

"Mr. Squills," said he, "you have had great experience in families."

"As good a practice as any in the county," said Mr. Squills, proudly; "more than I can manage. I shall advertise for a partner."

"And," resumed my father, "you must have observed almost invariably that, in every family, there is what father, mother, uncle, and aunt, pronounce to be one wonderful child."

"One at least," said Mr. Squills, smiling.

"It is easy," continued my father, "to say this is parental partiality,—but it is not so. Examine that child as a stranger, and it will startle yourself. You stand amazed at its eager curiosity—its quick comprehension—its ready wit—its delicate perception. Often, too, you will find some faculty strikingly developed; the child will have a turn for mechanics, perhaps, and make you a model of a steamboat—or it will have an ear tuned to verse, and will write you a poem like that it has got by heart from 'The Speaker'—or it will take to botany (like Pisistratus), with the old maid its aunt—or it will play a march on its sister's pianoforte. In short, even you, Squills, will declare that it is really a wonderful child."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Squills, thoughtfully, "there's a great deal of truth in what you say. Little Tom Dobbs *is* a wonderful child—so is Frank Stepington—and as for Johnny Styles, I must bring him here for you to hear him prattle on Natural History, and see how well he handles his pretty little microscope."

"Heaven forbid!" said my father. "And now let me proceed. These *thaumata* or wonders last till when, Mr. Squills?—last till the boy goes to school, and then, somehow or other, the *thaumata* vanish into thin air, like ghosts at the cockcrow. A year after the prodigy has been at the academy, father and mother, uncle and aunt, plague you no more with his doings and sayings; the extraordinary infant has become a very ordinary little boy. Is it not so, Mr. Squills."

"Indeed you are right, sir. How did you come to be so observant? you never seemed to——"

"Hush!" interrupted my father; and then, looking fondly at my mother's anxious face, he said, soothingly,—"Be comforted: this is wisely ordained—and it is for the best."

"It must be the fault of the school," said my mother, shaking her head.

"It is the necessity of the school, and its virtue, my Kate. Let any one of these wonderful children—wonderful as you thought Sisty himself—stay at home, and you will see its head grow bigger and bigger, and its body thinner and thinner—eh, Mr. Squills?—till the mind take all nourishment from the frame, and the frame, in turn, stint or make sickly the mind. You see that noble oak from the window. If the Chinese had brought it up, it would have been a tree in miniature at five years old, and at a hundred, you would have set it in a flower-pot on your table, no bigger than it was at five—a curiosity for its maturity at one age—a show for its diminutiveness at the other. No! the ordeal for talent is school; restore the stunted mannikin to the growing child, and then let the child, if it can, healthily, hardily, naturally, work its slow way up into greatness. If greatness be denied it, it will at least be a man, and that is better than to be a little Johnny Styles all its life—an oak in a pillbox."

At that moment I rushed into the room, glowing and panting, health on my cheek—vigor in my limbs—all childhood at my heart. "Oh, mamma, I have got up the kite—so high!—come and see. Do come, papa."

"Certainly," said my father; "only don't cry so loud—kites makes no noise in rising; yet, you see how they soar above the world. Come, Kate. Where is my hat? Ah—thank you, my boy."

"Kitty," said my father, looking at the kite, which, attached by its string to the peg I had stuck into the ground, rested calm in the sky, "never fear but what our kite shall fly as high; only, the human soul has stronger instincts to mount upward than a few sheets of paper on a frame-work of lath. But, observe, that to prevent its being lost in the freedom of space, we must attach it lightly to earth; and, observe again, my dear, that the higher it soars, the more string we must give it."

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

When I had reached the age of twelve, I had got to the head of the preparatory school to which I had been sent. And having thus exhausted all the oxygen of learning in that little receiver, my parents looked out for a wide range for my inspirations. During the last two years in which I had been at school, my love for study had returned; but it was a vigorous, wakeful, undreamy love, stimulated by competition, and animated by the practical desire to excel.

My father no longer sought to curb my intellectual aspirings. He had too great a reverence for sholarship not to wish me to become a scholar if possible; though he more than once said to me somewhat sadly, "Master books, but do not let them master you. Read to live, not live to read. One slave of the lamp is enough for a household: my servitude must not be a hereditary bondage."

My father looked round for a suitable academy; and the fame of Dr. Herman's "Philhellenic Institute" came to his ears.

Now, this Dr. Herman was the son of a German music-master, who had settled in England. He had completed his own education at the University of Bonn; but finding learning too common a drug in that market to bring the high price at which he valued his own, and having some theories as to political freedom which attached him to England, he resolved upon setting up a school which he designed as an "Era in the History of the Human Mind." Dr. Herman was one of the earliest of those new-fashioned authorities in education, who have, more lately, spread pretty numerously amongst us, and would have given, perhaps, a dangerous shake to the foundations of our great classical seminaries, if those last had not very wisely, though very cautiously, borrowed some of the more sensible principles which lay mixed and adulterated amongst the crotchets and chimeras of their innovating rivals and assailants.

Dr. Herman had written a great many learned works against every pre-existing method of instruction: that which had made the greatest noise was upon the infamous fiction of Spelling Books: "A more lying, roundabout, puzzle-headed delusion than that by which we confuse the clear instincts of truth in our accursed systems of spelling, was never concocted by the father of falsehood." Such was the exordium of this famous treatise. "For instance, take the monosyllable Cat. What a brazen forehead you must have, when you say to an infant, C, A, T,—spell Cat that is, three sounds forming a totally opposite compound—opposite in every detail, opposite in the whole—compose a poor little monosyllable, which, if you would but say the simple truth, the child will learn to spell merely by looking at it! How can three sounds, which run thus to the ear, *see—eh—tee*, compose the sound *cat?* Don't they rather compose the sound *see-eh té*, or *ceaty?* How can a system of education flourish that begins by so monstrous a falsehood, which the sense of hearing suffices to contradict? No wonder that the hornbook is the despair of mothers!" From this instance, the reader will perceive that Dr. Herman, in his theory of education, began at the beginning!—he took the bull fairly by the horns. As for the rest, upon a

broad principle of eclecticism, he had combined together every new patent invention for youthful idea-shooting. He had taken his trigger from Hofwyl; he had bought his wadding from Hamilton; he had got his copper-caps from Bell and Lancaster. The youthful idea ! he had rammed it tight !—he had rammed it loose !—he had rammed it with pictorial illustrations !—he had rammed it with the monitorial system !—he had rammed it in every conceivable way, and with every imaginable ramrod; but I have mournful doubts whether he shot the youthful idea an inch farther than it did under the old mechanism of flint and steel !

Nevertheless, as Dr. Herman really did teach a great many things too much neglected at schools; as, besides Latin and Greek, he taught a vast variety in that vague infinite now-a-days called "useful knowledge;" as he engaged lecturers on chemistry, engineering, and natural history; as arithmetic and the elements of physical science were enforced with zeal and care; as all sorts of gymnastics were intermingled with the sports of the play-ground;—so the youthful idea, if it did not go farther, spread its shots in a wider direction; and a boy could not stay there five years without learning *something*, which is more than can be said of all schools ! He learned at least to use his eyes, and his ears, and his limbs; order, cleanliness, exercise, grew into habits; and the school pleased the ladies and satisfied the gentlemen; in a word, it thrived: and Dr. Herman, at the time I speak of, numbered more than one hundred pupils. Now, when the worthy man first commenced the task of tuition, he had proclaimed the humanest abhorrence to the barbarous system of corporeal punishment. But, alas ! as his school increased in numbers, he had proportionately recanted these honorable and anti-birchen ideas. He had, reluctantly, perhaps,—honestly, no doubt, but with full determination—come to the conclusion that there are secret springs which can only be detected by the twigs of the divining rod; and having discovered with what comparative ease the whole mechanism of his little government could be carried on by the admission of the birch-regulator, so, as he grew richer, and lazier, and fatter, the Philhellenic Institute spun along as glibly as a top kept in vivacious movement by the perpetual application of the lash.

I believe that the school did not suffer in reputation from this sad apostasy on the part of the head-master; on the contrary, it seemed more natural and English—less outlandish and heretical. And it was at the zenith of its renown, when, one bright morning, with all my clothes nicely mended, and a large plumcake in my box, I was deposited at its hospitable gates.

Amongst Dr. Herman's various whimsicalities, there was one to which he had adhered with more fidelity than to the anti-corporeal punishment articles of his creed; and, in fact, it was upon this that he had caused those imposing words, "Philhellenic Institute," to blaze in gilt capitals in front of his academy. He belonged to that illustrious class of scholars who are now waging war on our popular mythologies, and upsetting all the associations which the Etonians and Harrovians connect with the household names of ancient history. In a word, he sought to restore to scholastic purity the mutilated orthography of Greek appellatives. He was extremely indignant that little boys should be brought up to confound Zeus with Jupiter, Ares with Mars, Artemis with Diana —the Greek deities with the Roman; and so rigidly did he inculcate the doctrine that these two sets of personages were to be kept constantly contradistinguished from each other, that his cross-examinations kept us in eternal confusion.

"Vat," he would exclaim, to some new boy fresh from some grammar school on the Etonian system—"Vat do you mean by dranslating *Zeus* Jupiter? Is dat amatory, irascible, cloud-compelling god of Olympus, vid his eagle and his ægis, in the smallest degree resembling de grave, formal, moral Jupiter Optimus Maximus of the Roman Capitol?—a god, Master Simpkins, who would have been perfectly shocked at the idea of running after innocent Fräulein dressed up as a swan or a bull ! I put dat question to you vonce for all, Master Simpkins." Master Simpkins took care to agree with the Doctor. "And how could you," resumed Dr. Herman majestically, turning to some other criminal alumnus—"how could you presume to dranslate de *Ares* of Homer,

sir, by the audacious vulgarism Mars? *Ares*, Master Jones, who roared as loud as ten thousand men when he was hurt; or as you will roar if I catch you calling him Mars again! *Ares*, who covered seven plectra of ground; confound *Ares*, the manslayer, with the Mars or Mavors whom de Romans stole from de Sabines! Mars, de solemn and calm protector of Rome! Master Jones, Master Jones, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" And then waxing enthusiastic, and warming more and more into German gutturals and pronunciation, the good Doctor would lift up his hands, with two great rings on his thumbs, and exclaim—"Und Du! and dou, *Aphroditè;* dou, whose bert de Seasons velcomed! dou, who didst put Atonis into a coffer, and den tid durn him into an anemone; dou to be called *Venus* by dat snivel-nosed little Master Budderfield! Venus, who presided over Baumgartens and funerals, and nasty tinking sewers! Venus Cloacina—O mien Gott! Come here, Master Budderfield; I must flog you for that; I must indeed, liddle boy!"

As our Philhellenic preceptor carried his archæological purism into all Greek proper names, it was not likely that my unhappy baptismal would escape. The first time I signed my exercise I wrote "Pisistratus Caxton" in my best round-hand. "And dey call your baba a scholar!" said the doctor, contemptuously. "Your name, sir, is Greek; and, as Greek, you vill be dood enough to write it, vith vat you call an *e* and an *o*—P, E, I, S, I, S, T, R, A, T, O, S. Vat can you expect for to come to, Master Caxton, if you don't pay de care dat is proper to your own dood name—de *e*, and de *o*? Ach! let me see no more of your vile corruptions! Mein Gott! Pi! ven de name is Pei!"

The next time I wrote home to my father, modestly implying that I was short of cash, that a trap-bat would be acceptable, and that the favorite goddess amongst the boys (whether Greek or Roman was very immaterial) was *Diva Moneta*, I felt a glow of classical pride in signing myself, "your affectionate Peisistratos." The next post brought a sad damper to my scholastic exultation. The letter ran thus:—

"My Dear Son,—I prefer my old acquaintances Thucydides and Pisistratus to Thoukudides and Peisistratos. Horace is familiar to me, but Horatius is only known to me as Cocles. Pisistratus can play at trap-ball; but I find no authority in pure Greek to allow me to suppose that that game was known to Peisistratos. I should be too happy to send you a drachma or so, but I have no coins in my possession current at Athens at the time when Pisistratus was spelt Peisistratos.—Your affectionate father,

"A. Caxton."

Verily, here indeed was the first practical embarrassment produced by that melancholy anachronism which my father had so prophetically deplored. However, nothing like experience to prove the value of compromise in this world! Peisistratos continued to write exercises, and a second letter from Pisistratus was followed by the trap-bat.

CHAPTER II.

I was somewhere about sixteen when, on going home for the holidays, I found my mother's brother settled among the household *Lares*. Uncle Jack, as he was familiarly called, was a light-hearted, plausible, enthusiastic, talkative fellow, who had spent three small fortunes in trying to make a large one.

Uncle Jack was a great speculator; but in all his speculations he never affected to think of himself,—it was always the good of his fellow-creatures that he had at heart; and in this ungrateful world fellow-creatures are not to be relied upon! On coming of age, he inherited £6,000 from his maternal grandfather. It seemed to him then that his fellow-creatures were sadly imposed upon by their tailors. Those ninth-parts of humanity notoriously eked out their fractional existence by asking nine times too much for the clothing which civilization, and perhaps a change of climate, render more necessary to us than to our predecessors, the Picts. Out of pure philanthropy, Uncle Jack started a "*Grand National Benevolent Clothing Company*," which undertook to supply the public with inexpressibles of the best Saxon cloth at 7s. 6d. a pair; coats, superfine, £1 18s.; and waistcoats at so much per dozen. They were all to be worked off by steam. Thus the rascally tailors were to be put down, humanity clad, and the philanthropists rewarded (but

that was a secondary consideration) with a clear return of 30 per cent. In spite of the evident charitableness of this Christian design, and the irrefragable calculations upon which it was based, this company died a victim to the ignorance and unthankfulness of our fellow-creatures. And all that remained of Jack's £6,000 was a fifty-fourth share in a small steam-engine, a large assortment of ready-made pantaloons, and the liabilities of the directors.

Uncle Jack disappeared, and went on his travels. The same spirit of philanthropy which characterized the speculations of his purse attended the risks of his person. Uncle Jack had a natural leaning towards all distressed communities: if any tribe, race, or nation was down in the world, Uncle Jack threw himself plump into the scale to redress the balance. Poles, Greeks (the last were then fighting the Turks), Mexicans, Spaniards—Uncle Jack thrust his nose into all their squabbles! Heaven forbid I should mock thee, poor Uncle Jack! for those generous predilections towards the unfortunate; only, whenever a nation is in a misfortune, there is always a job going on! The Polish cause, the Greek cause, the Mexican cause, and the Spanish cause, are necessarily mixed up with loans and subscriptions. These Continental patriots, when they take up the sword with one hand, generally contrive to thrust the other hand deep into their neighbors' breeches' pockets. Uncle Jack went to Greece, thence he went to Spain, thence to Mexico. No doubt he was of great service to those afflicted populations, for he came back with unanswerable proof of their gratitude, in the shape of £3,000. Shortly after this appeared a prospectus of the "New, Grand, National, Benevolent Insurance Company, for the Industrious Classes."

This invaluable document, after setting forth the immense benefits to society arising from habits of providence, and the introduction of insurance companies—proving the infamous rate of premiums exacted by the existent offices, and their inapplicability to the wants of the honest artisan, and declaring that nothing but the purest intentions of benefiting their fellow-creatures, and raising the moral tone of society, had led the directors to institute a new society, founded on the noblest principles and the most moderate calculations—proceeded to demonstrate that twenty-four and a half per cent. was the smallest possible return the shareholders could anticipate. The company began under the fairest auspices: an archbishop was caught as president, on the condition always that he should give nothing but his name to the society. Uncle Jack—more euphoniously designated as "the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esquire"—was honorary secretary, and the capital stated at two millions. But such was the obtuseness of the industrious classes, so little did they perceive the benefits of subscribing one-and-nine-pence a-week from the age of twenty-one to fifty, in order to secure at the latter age the annuity of £18, that the company dissolved into thin air, and with it dissolved also Uncle Jack's £3,000. Nothing more was then seen or heard of him for three years. So obscure was his existence, that on the death of an aunt who left him a small farm in Cornwall, it was necessary to advertise that "If John Jones Tibbets, Esq., would apply to Messrs. Blunt and Tin, Lothbury, between the hours of ten and four, he would hear of something to his advantage."

But, even as a conjuror declares that he will call the ace of spades, and the ace of spades, that you thought you had safely under your foot, turns up on the table—so with this advertisement suddenly turned up Uncle Jack. With inconceivable satisfaction did the new landowner settle himself in his comfortable homestead. The farm, which was about two hundred acres, was in the best possible condition, and saving one or two chemical preparations, which cost Uncle Jack, upon the most scientific principles, thirty acres of buck-wheat, the ears of which came up, poor things, all spotted and speckled, as if they had been inoculated with the small-pox, Uncle Jack for the first two years was a thriving man. Unluckily, however, one day Uncle Jack discovered a coal-mine in a beautiful field of Swedish turnips; in another week the house was full of engineers and naturalists, and in another month appeared, in my uncle's best style, much improved by practice, a prospectus of the "Grand, National, anti-Monopoly Coal Com-

pany, instituted on behalf of the poor householders of London, and against the Monster Monopoly of the London Coal Wharfs.

"A vein of the finest coal has been discovered on the estates of the celebrated philanthropist, John Jones Tibbets, Esq. This new mine, the Molly Wheal, having been satisfactorily tested by that eminent engineer, Giles Compass, Esq., promises an inexhaustible field to the energies of the benevolent and the wealth of the capitalist. It is calculated that the best coals may be delivered, screened, at the mouth of the Thames, for 18s. per load, yielding a profit of not less than forty-eight per cent. to the shareholders. Shares, £50, to be paid in five instalments. Capital to be subscribed, one million. For shares, early application must be made to Messrs. Blunt and Tin, solicitors, Lothbury."

Here, then, was something tangible for fellow-creatures to go on—there was land, there was a mine, there was coal, and there actually came share-holders and capital. Uncle Jack was so persuaded that his fortune was now to be made, and had, moreover, so great a desire to share the glory of ruining the monster monopoly of the London wharfs, that he refused a very large offer to dispose of the property altogether, remained chief shareholder, and removed to London, where he set up his carriage, and gave dinners to his fellow-directors. For no less than three years did this company flourish, having submitted the entire direction and working of the mines to that eminent engineer, Giles Compass—twenty per cent. was paid regularly by that gentleman to the shareholders, and the shares were at more than cent. per cent., when one bright morning Giles Compass, Esq., unexpectedly removed himself to that wider field for genius like his, the United States; and it was discovered that the mine had for more than a year run itself into a great pit of water, and that Mr. Compass had been paying the shareholders out of their own capital. My uncle had the satisfaction this time of being ruined in very good company; three doctors of divinity, two county members, a Scotch lord, and an East India director, were all in the same boat—that boat which went down with the coal-mine into the great water-pit!

It was just after this event that Uncle Jack, sanguine and light-hearted as ever, suddenly recollected his sister, Mrs. Caxton, and not knowing where else to dine, thought he would repose his limbs under my father's *trabes citrea*, which the ingenious W. S. Landor opines should be translated "mahogany." You never saw a more charming man than Uncle Jack. All plump people are more popular than thin people. There is something jovial and pleasant in the sight of a round face! What conspiracy could succeed when its head was a lean and hungry-looking fellow, like Cassius? If the Roman patriots had had Uncle Jack amongst them, perhaps they would never have furnished a tragedy to Shakspeare. Uncle Jack was as plump as a partridge—not unwieldy, not corpulent, not obese, not "*vastus*," which Cicero objects to in an orator—but every crevice comfortably filled up. Like the ocean, "time wrote no wrinkles on his glassy (or brassy) brow." His natural lines were all upward curves, his smile most ingratiating, his eye so frank, even his trick of rubbing his clean, well-fed, English-looking hands, had something about it coaxing and *debonnair*, something that actually decoyed you into trusting your money into hands so prepossessing. Indeed, to him might be fully applied the expression—"Sedem animæ in extremis digitis habet;" "He had his soul's seat in his finger-ends." The critics observe that few men have ever united in equal perfection the imaginative with the scientific faculties. "Happy he," exclaims Schiller, "who combines the enthusiast's warmth with the worldly man's light"—light and warmth, Uncle Jack had them both. He was a perfect symphony of bewitching enthusiasm and convincing calculation. Dicæopolis in the *Acharnenses*, in presenting a gentleman called Nicharchus to the audience, observes —"He is small, I confess, but there is nothing lost in him; all is knave that is not fool."

Parodying the equivocal compliment, I may say that though Uncle Jack was no giant, there was nothing lost in him. Whatever was not philanthropy was arithmetic, and whatever was not arithmetic was philanthropy. He would have been equally dear to Howard and to Cocker. Uncle Jack was

comely, too—clear-skinned and florid, had a little mouth, with good teeth, wore no whiskers, shaved his beard as close as if it were one of his grand national companies; his hair, once somewhat sandy, was now rather grayish, which increased the respectability of his appearance; and he wore it flat at the sides and raised in a peak at the top; his organs of constructiveness and ideality were pronounced by Mr. Squills to be prodigious, and those freely developed bumps gave great breadth to his forehead. Well-shaped, too, was Uncle Jack, about five feet eight, the proper height for an active man of business. He wore a black coat; but to make the nap look the fresher, he had given it the relief of gilt buttons, on which were wrought a small crown and anchor; at a distance this button looked like the king's button and gave him the air of one who has a place about Court. He always wore a white neckcloth without starch, a frill, and a diamond pin, which last furnished him with observations upon certain mines of Mexico, which he had a great, but hitherto unsatisfied desire of seeing worked by a grand National United Britons Company. His waistcoat of a morning was pale buff—of an evening, embroidered velvet; wherewith were connected sundry schemes of an "association for the improvement of native manufactures." His trousers, matutinally, were of the color vulgarly called "blotting paper;" and he never wore boots, which, he said, unfitted a man for exercise, but short drab gaiters and square-toed shoes. His watch-chain was garnished with a vast number of seals: each seal, indeed, represented the device of some defunct company, and they might be said to resemble the scalps of the slain, worn by the aboriginal Iroquois—concerning whom, indeed, he had once entertained philanthropic designs, compounded of conversion to Christianity on the principles of the English Episcopal Church, and of an advantageous exchange of beaver-skins for bibles, brandy, and gunpowder.

That Uncle Jack should win my heart was no wonder; my mother's he had always won from her earliest recollection of his having persuaded her to let her great doll (a present from her godmother) be put up to a raffle for the benefit of the chimney-sweepers. "So like him,—so good!" she would often say pensively; "they paid sixpence a-piece for the raffle—twenty tickets, and the doll cost £2. Nobody was taken in, and the doll, poor thing (it had such blue eyes!) went for a quarter of its value. But Jack said nobody could guess what good the ten shillings did to the chimney-sweepers." Naturally enough, I say, my mother liked Uncle Jack! but my father liked him quite as well, and that was a strong proof of my uncle's powers of captivation. However it is noticeable that when some retired scholar is once interested in an active man of the world, he is more inclined to admire him than others are. Sympathy with such a companion gratifies at once his curiosity and his indolence; he can travel with him, scheme with him, fight with him, go with him through all the adventures of which his own books speak so eloquently, and all the time never stir from his easy-chair. My father said "that it was like listening to Ulysses to hear Uncle Jack!" Uncle Jack, too, had been in Greece and Asia Minor, gone over the site of the siege of Troy, ate figs at Marathon, shot hares in the Peloponnesus, and drank three pints of brown stout at the top of the Great Pyramid.

Therefore, Uncle Jack was like a book of reference to my father. Verily at times he looked on him *as* a book, and took him down after dinner as he would a volume of Dodwell or Pausanias. In fact, I believe that scholars who never move from their cells are not the less an eminently curious, bustling, active race, rightly understood. Even as old Burton saith of himself—"Though I live a collegiate student, and lead a monastic life, sequestered from those tumults and troubles of the world, I hear and see what is done abroad, how others run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in town and country:" which citation sufficeth to show that scholars are naturally the most active men of the word, only that while their heads plot with Augustus, fight with Julius, sail with Columbus, and change the face of the globe with Alexander, Attila, or Mahomet, there is a certain mysterious attraction, which our improved knowledge of mesmerism will doubtless soon explain to the satisfaction of science, between that extremer and antipodal part of the human frame, called in the

vulgate "the seat of honor," and the stuffed leather of an armed chair. Learning somehow or other sinks down to that part into which it was first driven, and produces therein a leaden heaviness and weight, which counteract those lively emotions of the brain, that might otherwise render students too mercurial and agile for the safety of established order. I leave this conjecture to the consideration of experimentalists in the physics.

I was still more delighted than my father with Uncle Jack. He was full of amusing tricks, could conjure wonderfully, make a bunch of keys dance a hornpipe, and if ever you gave him half-a-crown, he was sure to turn it into a halfpenny. He was only unsuccessful in turning my halfpennies into halfcrowns.

We took long walks together, and in the midst of his most diverting conversation my uncle was always an observer. He would stop to examine the nature of the soil, fill my pockets (not his own) with great lumps of clay, stones, and rubbish, to analyze when he got home, by the help of some chemical apparatus he had borrowed from Mr. Squills. He would stand an hour at a cottage door, admiring the little girls who were straw-platting, and then walk into the nearest farm-houses, to suggest the feasibility of "a national straw-plait association." All this fertility of intellect was, alas! wasted in that "ingrata terra" into which Uncle Jack had fallen. No squire could be persuaded into the belief that his mother-stone was pregnant with minerals; no farmer talked into weaving straw-plat into a proprietary association. So, even as an ogre, having devastated the surrounding country, begins to cast a hungry eye on his own little ones, Uncle Jack's mouth, long defrauded of juicier and more legitimate morsels, began to water for a bite of my innocent father.

CHAPTER III.

At this time we were living in what may be called a very respectable style for people who made no pretence to ostentation. On the skirts of a large village stood a square red brick house, about the date of Queen Anne. Upon the top of the house was a balustrade; why, heaven knows—for nobody, except our great tom-cat Ralph, ever walked upon the leads—but so it was, and so it often is in houses from the time of Elizabeth, yea, even to that of Victoria. This balustrade was divided by low piers, on each of which was placed a round ball. The centre of the house was distinguishable by an architrave, in the shape of a triangle, under which was a niche, probably meant for a figure, but the figure was not forthcoming. Below this was the window (encased with carved pilasters) of my dear mother's little sitting-room; and lower still, raised on a flight of six steps, was a very handsome-looking door, with a projecting porch. All the windows, with smallish panes and largish frames, were relieved with stone copings;—so that the house had an air of solidity, and well-to-do-ness about it—nothing tricky on the one hand, nothing decayed on the other. The house stood a little back from the garden gates, which were large, and set between two piers surmounted with vases: many might object, that in wet weather you had to walk some way to your carriage; but we obviated that objection by not keeping a carriage.

To the right of the house the enclosure contained a little lawn, a laurel hermitage, a square pond, a modest green-house, and half-a-dozen plots of mignonette, heliotrope, roses, pinks, sweetwilliam, etc. To the left spread the kitchen-garden, lying screened by espaliers yielding the finest apples in the neighborhood, and divided by three winding gravel walks, of which the extremest was backed by a wall, whereon, as it lay full south, peaches, pears, and nectarines sunned themselves early into well-remembered flavor. This walk was appropriated to my father. Book in hand, he would, on fine days, pace to and fro, often stopping, dear man, to jot down a pencil-note, gesticulate, or soliloquize. And there, when not in his study, my mother would be sure to find him. In these deambulations, as he called them, he had generally a companion so extraordinary, that I expect to be met with a hillalu of incredulous contempt when I specify it. Nevertheless I vow and protest that it is strictly true, and no invention of an exaggerating romancer.

It happened one day that my mother had coaxed Mr. Caxton to walk with her to market. By the way they passed a sward of green, on which sundry little boys were engaged upon the lapidation of a lame duck. It seemed that the duck was to have been taken to market, when it was discovered not only to be lame, but dyspeptic; perhaps some weed had disagreed with its ganglionic apparatus, poor thing. However that be, the goodwife had declared that the duck was good for nothing; and upon the petition of her children, it had been consigned to them for a little innocent amusement, and to keep them out of harm's way.

My mother declared that she never before saw her lord and master roused to such animation. He dispersed the urchins, released the duck, carried it home, kept it in a basket by the fire, feed it and physicked it till it recovered; and then it was consigned to the square pond. But lo ! the duck knew its benefactor; and whenever my father appeared outside his door, it would catch sight of him, flap from the pond, gain the lawn, and hobble after him (for it never quite recovered the use of its left leg), till it reached the walk by the peaches; and there sometimes it would sit, gravely watching its master's deambulations; sometimes stroll by his side, and, at all events, never leave him, till, at his return home, he fed it with his own hands; and, quacking her peaceful adieus, the nymph then retired to her natural element.

With the exception of my mother's favorite morning-room, the principal sitting-rooms—that is, the study, the dining-room, and what was emphatically called "the best drawing-room," which was only occupied on great occasions—looked south. Tall beeches, firs, poplars, and a few oaks, backed the house, and indeed surrounded it on all sides but the south; so that it was well sheltered from the winter cold and the summer heat. Our principal domestic, in dignity and station, was Mrs. Primmins, who was waiting gentlewoman, housekeeper, and tyrannical dictatrix of the whole establishment. Two other maids, a gardener, and a footman, composed the rest of the serving household.

Save a few pasture-fields, which he let, my father was not troubled with land. His income was derived from the interest of about £15,000, partly in the three per cents, partly on mortgage; and what with my mother and Mrs. Primmins, this income always yielded enough to satisfy my father's single hobby for books, pay for my education, and entertain our neighbors, rarely, indeed, at dinner, but very often at tea. My dear mother boasted that our society was very select. It consisted chiefly of the clergyman and his family, two old maids who gave themselves great airs, a gentleman who had been in the East India service, and who lived in a large white house at the top of the hill; some half-a-dozen squires and their wives and children; Mr. Squills, still a bachelor: and once a-year cards were exchanged —and dinners too—with certain aristocrats, who inspired my mother with a great deal of unnecessary awe; since she declared they were the most good-natured easy people in the world, and always stuck their cards in the most conspicuous part of the looking-glass frame over the chimney-piece of the best drawing-room. Thus you perceive that our natural position was one highly creditable to us, proving the soundness of our finances and the gentility of our pedigree—of which last more hereafter. At present I content myself with saying on that head, that even the proudest of the neighboring squirearchs always spoke of us as a very ancient family. But all my father ever said, to evince pride of ancestry, was in honor of William Caxton, citizen and printer in the reign of Edward IV.—"Clarum et venerabile nomen !" an ancestor a man of letters might be justly vain of.

"Heus," said my father, stopping short, and lifting his eyes from the Colloquies of Erasmus, "salve multum, jucundissime."

Uncle Jack was not much of a scholar, but he knew enough Latin to answer, "Salve tantundem, mi frater."

My father smiled approvingly. "I see you comprehend true urbanity, or politeness, as we phrase it. There is an elegance in addressing the husband of your sister as brother. Erasmus commends it in his opening chapter, under the head of 'Salutandi formulæ.' And, indeed," added my father thoughtfully, "there is no great difference between politeness and affection. My author here observes that it is polite to express salutation in

certain minor distresses of nature. One should salute a gentleman in yawning, salute him in hiccuping, salute him in sneezing, salute him in coughing;—and that evidently because of your interest in his health; for he may dislocate his jaw in yawning, and the hiccup is often a symptom of grave disorder, and sneezing is perilous to the small blood-vessels of the head, and coughing is either a tracheal, bronchial, pulmonary, or ganglionic affection."

"Very true. The Turks always salute in sneezing, and they are a remarkably polite people," said Uncle Jack. "But, my dear brother, I was just looking with admiration at these apple-trees of yours. I never saw finer. I am a great judge of apples. I find, in talking with my sister, that you make very little 'profit by them. That's a pity. One might establish a cider orchard in this county. You can take your own fields in hand; you can hire more, so as to make the whole, say a hundred acres. You can plant a very extensive apple-orchard on a grand scale. I have just run through the calculations; they are quite startling. Take 40 trees per acre—that's the proper average—at 1s. 6d. per tree; 4,000 trees for 100 acres £300; labor of digging, trenching, say £10 an acre—total for one hundred acres, £1,000. Pave the bottoms of the holes to prevent the tap-root striking down into the bad soil—oh, I am very close and careful you see, in all minutiæ!—always was—pave 'em with rubbish and stones, 6d. a hole; that for 4,000 trees the 100 acres is £100. Add the rent of the land, at 30s. an acre, £150. And how stands the total?" Here Uncle Jack proceeded rapidly ticking off the items with his fingers:—

"Trees, ...	£ 300
Labor, ...	1,000
Paving holes, . . .	100
Rent, ...	150
Total, . .	£1,550

That's your expense. Mark.—Now to the profit. Orchards in Kent realize £100 an acre, some even £150; but let's be moderate, say only £50 an acre, and your gross profit per year, from a capital of £1,550, will be £5,000,—£5,000 a-year. Think of that, brother Caxton. Deduct 10 per cent., or £500 a-year, for gardeners' wages, manure, etc., and the net product is £4,500. Your fortune's made, man—it is made—I wish you joy!" And Uncle Jack rubbed his hands.

"Bless me, father," said eagerly the young Pisistratus, who had swallowed with ravished ears every syllable and figure of this inviting calculation, "Why, we should be as rich as Squire Rollick; and then, you know, sir, you could keep a pack of fox-hounds!"

"And buy a large library," added Uncle Jack, with more subtle knowledge of human nature as to its appropriate temptations. "There's my friend the archbishop's collection to be sold."

Slowly recovering his breath, my father gently turned his eyes from one to the other; and then, laying his left hand on my head, while with the right he held up Erasmus rebukingly to Uncle Jack, said—

"See how easily you can sow covetousness and avidity in the youthful mind. Ah, brother!"

"You are too severe, sir. See how the dear boy hangs his head! Fie!—natural enthusiasm of his years—'gay hope by fancy fed,' as the poet says. Why, for that fine boy's sake, you ought not to lose so certain an occasion of wealth, I may say, untold. For, observe, you will form a nursery of crabs; each year you go on grafting and enlarging your plantation, renting, nay, why not buying, more land? Gad, sir! in twenty years you might cover half the county; but say you stop short at 2,000 acres, why the net profit is £90,000 a-year. A duke's income—a duke's—and going a-begging as I may say."

"But stop," said I, modestly; "the trees don't grow in a year. I know when our last apple-tree was planted—it is five years ago—it was then three years old, and it only bore one half-bushel last autumn."

"What an intelligent lad it is!—Good head there. Oh, he'll do credit to his great fortune, brother," said Uncle Jack, approvingly. "True, my boy. But in the meanwhile we could fill the ground, as they do in Kent, with gooseberries and currants, or onions and cabbages. Nevertheless, considering we are not great capitalists, I am afraid we must give up a share of our profits to diminish our outlay. So, harkye, Pisistratus—(look at him, brother—simple as he

stands there, I think he is born with a silver spoon in his mouth)—harkye, now to the mysteries of speculation. Your father shall quietly buy the land, and then, presto! we will issue a prospectus, and start a Company. Associations can wait five years for a return. Every year, meanwhile, increases the value of the shares. Your father takes, we say, fifty shares at £50 each, paying only an instalment of £2 a share. He sells 35 shares at cent. per cent. He keeps the remaining 15, and his fortune's made all the same; only it is not quite so large as if he had kept the whole concern in his own hands. What say you now, brother Caxton? '*Visne edere pomum?*' as we used to say at school."

"I don't want a shilling more than I have got," said my father resolutely. "My wife would not love me better; my food would not nourish me more; my boy would not, in all probability, be half so hardy, or a tenth part so industrious; and——"

"But," interrupted Uncle Jack, pertinaciously, and reserving his grand argument for the last, "the good you would confer on the community—the progress given to the natural productions of your country, the wholesome beverage of cider, brought within cheap reach of the laboring classes. If it was only for your sake, should I have urged this question? should I now? is it in my character? But for the sake of the public! mankind! of our fellow-creatures! Why, sir, England could not get on if gentlemen like you had not a little philanthropy and speculation."

"Papæ!" exclaimed my father, "to think that England can't get on without turning Austin Caxton into an apple-merchant! My dear Jack, listen. You remind me of a colloquy in this book; wait a bit—here it is —*Pamphagus and Cocles.*—Cocles recognizes his friend, who had been absent for many years, by his eminent and remarkable nose. —Pamphagus says, rather irritably, that he is not ashamed of his nose. 'Ashamed of it! no, indeed,' says Cocles: 'I never saw a nose that could be put to so many uses!' 'Ha,' says Pamphagus (whose curiosity is aroused), 'uses! what uses?' Whereon (*lepidissime frater!*) Cocles, with eloquence as rapid as yours, runs on with a countless list of the uses to which so vast a development of the organ can be applied. 'If the cellar was deep, it could sniff up the wine like an elephant's trunk,—if the bellows were missing, it could blow the fire,—if the lamp was too glaring, it could suffice for a shade,—it would serve as a speaking-trumpet to a herald,—it could sound a signal of battle in the field,—it would do for a wedge in wood-cutting—a spade for digging—a scythe for mowing—an anchor in sailing; till Pamphagus cries out, 'Lucky dog that I am! and I never knew before what a useful piece of furniture I carried about with me.'" My father paused and strove to whistle, but that effort of harmony failed him—and he added —smiling, "So much for my apple-trees, brother John. Leave them to their natural destination of filling tarts and dumplings."

Uncle Jack looked a little discomposed for a moment; but he then laughed with his usual heartiness, and saw that he had not yet got to my father's blind side. I confess that my revered parent rose in my estimation after that conference; and I began to see that a man may not be quite without common sense, though he is a scholar. Indeed, whether it was that Uncle Jack's visit acted as a gentle stimulant to his relaxed faculties, or that I, now grown older and wiser, began to see his character more clearly, I date from those summer holidays, the commencement of that familiar and endearing intimacy which ever after existed between my father and myself. Often I deserted the more extensive rambles of Uncle Jack, or the greater allurements of a cricket-match in the village, or a day's fishing in Squire Rollick's preserves, for a quiet stroll with my father by the old peach-wall;—sometimes silent, indeed, and already musing over the future, while he was busy with the past, but amply rewarded when, suspending his lecture, he would pour forth hoards of varied learning, rendered amusing by his quaint comments, and that Socratic satire which only fell short of wit because it never passed into malice. At some moments, indeed, the vein ran into eloquence; and with some fine heroic sentiment in his old books, his stooping form rose erect, his eye flashed; and you saw that he had not been originally formed and wholly meant for the obscure seclusion in which his harmless days now wore contentedly away.

CHAPTER IV.

"EGAD, sir, the county is going to the dogs! Our sentiments are not represented in parliament or out of it. The County Mercury has ratted, and be hanged to it! and now we have not one newspaper in the whole shire to express the sentiments of the respectable part of the community!"

This speech was made on the occasion of one of the rare dinners given by Mr. and Mrs. Caxton to the grandees of the neighborhood, and uttered by no less a person than Squire Rollick, of Rollick Hall, chairman of the quarter-sessions.

I confess that I (for I was permitted on that first occasion not only to dine with the guests, but to outstay the ladies, in virtue of my growing years, and my promise to abstain from the decanters)—I confess, I say, that I, poor innocent, was puzzled to conjecture what sudden interest in the county newspaper could cause Uncle Jack to prick up his ears like a war-horse at the sound of the drum, and rush so incontinently across the interval between Squire Rollick and himself. But the mind of that deep and truly knowing man was not to be plumbed by a chit of my age. You could not fish for the shy salmon in that pool with a crooked pin and a bobbin, as you would for minnows; or, to indulge in a more worthy illustration, you could not say of him, as St. Gregory saith of the streams of Jordan, "A lamb could wade easily through that ford."

"Not a county newspaper to advocate the rights of——" here my uncle stopped, as if at a loss, and whispered, in my ear, "What are his politics?" "Don't know," answered I. Uncle Jack intuitively took down from his memory the phrase most readily at hand, and added, with a nasal intonation, "the rights of our distressed fellow-creatures!"

My father scratched his eyebrow with his fore-finger, as he was apt to do when doubtful; the rest of the company—a silent set—looked up.

"Fellow-creatures!" said Mr. Rollick—"fellow-fiddlesticks!"

Uncle Jack was clearly in the wrong box. He drew out of it cautiously—"I mean," said he, "our *respectable* fellow-creatures;" and then suddenly it occurred to him that a "County Mercury" would naturally represent the agricultural interest, and that if Mr. Rollick said that the "County Mercury ought to be hanged," he was one of those politicians who had already begun to call the agricultural interest "a Vampire." Flushed with that fancied discovery, Uncle Jack rushed on, intending to bear along with the stream, thus fortunately directed, all the "rubbish" * subsequently shot into Covent Garden and Hall of Commerce.

"Yes, respectable fellow-creatures, men of capital and enterprise! For what are these country squires compared to our wealthy merchants? What is this agricultural interest that professes to be the prop of the land?"

"Professes!" cried Squire Rollick—"it *is* the prop of the land; and as for those manufacturing fellows who have bought up the Mercury——"

"Bought up the Mercury, have they, the villains!" cried Uncle Jack, interrupting the Squire, and now bursting into full scent—"Depend upon it, sir, it is a part of a diabolical system of buying up, which must be exposed manfully.—Yes, as I was saying, what is that agricultural interest which they desire to ruin? which they declare to be so bloated—which they call 'a vampire!' they the true blood-suckers, the venomous millocrats! Fellow-creatures, sir! I may well call distressed fellow-creatures the members of that much suffering class of which you yourself are an ornament. What can be more deserving of our best efforts for relief, than a country gentleman like yourself, we'll say—of a nominal £5,000 a-year—compelled to keep up an establishment, pay for his foxhounds, support the whole population by contributions to the poor-rates, support the whole church by tithes; all justice, jails, and prosecutions by the county rates—all thoroughfares by the highway rates—ground down by mortgages, Jews, or jointures; having to provide for younger children; enormous expenses for cutting his woods, manuring his model farm, and fattening huge oxen till every pound of flesh costs him five pounds sterling in oil-cake; and then the lawsuits necessary to protect his rights; plun-

* "We talked sad rubbish when we first began," says Mr. Cobden in one of his speeches.

dered on all hands by poachers, sheep-stealers, dog-stealers, churchwardens, overseers, gardeners, gamekeepers, and that necessary rascal, his steward. If ever there was a distressed fellow-creature in the world, it is a country gentleman with a great estate."

My father evidently thought this an exquisite piece of banter, for by the corner of his mouth I saw that he chuckled inly.

Squire Rollick, who had interrupted the speech by sundry approving exclamations, particularly at the mention of poor-rates, tithes, county rates, mortgages, and poachers, here pushed the bottle to Uncle Jack, and said, civilly,—"There's a great deal of truth in what you say, Mr. Tibbets. The agricultural interest is going to ruin; and when it does, I would not give *that* for Old England!" and Mr. Rollick snapped his finger and thumb. "But what is to be done—done for the county? There's the rub."

"I was just coming to that," quoth Uncle Jack. "You say that you have not a county paper that upholds your cause, and denounces your enemies."

"Not since the Whigs bought the ——shire Mercury."

"Why, good heavens! Mr. Rollick, how can you suppose that you will have justice done you, if at this time of day you neglect the press? The press, sir—there it is—air we breathe! What you want is a great national—no, not a national—A PROVINCIAL proprietary weekly journal, supported liberally and steadily by that mighty party whose very existence is at stake. Without such a paper, you are gone, you are dead, extinct, defunct, buried alive; *with* such a paper, well conducted, well edited by a man of the world, of education, of practical experience in agriculture and human nature, mines, corn, manure, insurances, acts of parliament, cattle-shows, the state of parties, and the best interests of society—with such a man and such a paper, you will carry all before you. But it must be done by subscription, by association, by co-operation, by a Grand Provincial Benevolent Agricultural Anti-innovating Society."

"Egad, sir, you are right!" said Mr. Rollick, slapping his thigh; "and I'll ride over to our Lord-Lieutenant to-morrow. His eldest son ought to carry the county."

"And he will, if you encourage the press and set up a journal," said Uncle Jack, rubbing his hands, and then gently stretching them out, and drawing them gradually together, as if he were already enclosing in that airy circle the unsuspecting guineas of the unborn association.

All happiness dwells more in the hope than the possession; and at that moment, I dare be sworn that Uncle Jack felt a livelier rapture, *circum præcordia*, warming his entrails, and diffusing throughout his whole frame of five feet eight the prophetic glow of the Magna Diva Moneta, than if he had enjoyed for ten years the actual possession of King Crœsus's privy purse.

"I thought Uncle Jack was not a Tory," said I to my father the next day.

My father, who cared nothing for politics, opened his eyes.

"Are you a Tory or a Whig, papa?"

"Um," said my father—"there's a great deal to be said on both sides of the question. You see, my boy, that Mrs. Primmins has a great many moulds for our butter-pats; sometimes they come up with a crown on them, sometimes with the more popular impress of a cow. It is all very well for those who dish up the butter to print it according to their taste, or in proof of their abilities; it is enough for us to butter our bread, say grace, and pay for the dairy. Do you understand?"

"Not a bit, sir."

"Your namesake Pisistratus was wiser than you, then," said my father. "And now let us feed the duck. Where's your uncle?"

"He has borrowed Mr. Squill's mare, sir, and gone with Squire Rollick to the great lord they were talking of."

"Oho!" said my father, "brother Jack is going to print his butter!"

And indeed Uncle Jack played his cards so well on this occasion, and set before the Lord-Lieutenant, with whom he had a personal interview, so fine a prospectus, and so nice a calculation, that before my holidays were over, he was installed in a very handsome office in the county town, with private apartments over it, and a salary of £500 a-year—for advocating the cause of his distressed fellow-creatures, including noblemen, squires, yeomanry, farmers, and all yearly

subscribers in the NEW PROPRIETARY AGRICULTURAL ANTI-INNOVATING ——SHIRE WEEKLY GAZETTE. At the head of his newspaper Uncle Jack caused to be engraved a crown supported by a flail and a crook, with the motto, "Pro rege et grege:"—And that was the way in which Uncle Jack printed his pats of butter.

CHAPTER V.

I SEEMED to myself to have made a leap in life when I returned to school. I no longer felt as a boy. Uncle Jack, out of his own purse, had presented me with my first pair of Wellington boots; my mother had been coaxed into allowing me a small tail to jackets hitherto tail-less; my collars, which had been wont, spaniel-like, to flap and fall about my neck, now, terrier-wise, stood erect and rampant, encompassed with a circumvallation of whalebone, buckram, and black silk. I was, in truth, nearly seventeen, and I gave myself the airs of a man. Now, be it observed, that that crisis in adolescent existence wherein we first pass from Master Sisty into Mr. Pisistratus, or Pisistratus Caxton, Esq.—wherein we arrogate, and with tacit concession from our elders, the long-envied title of "young man"—always seems a sudden and imprompt upshooting and elevation. We do not mark the gradual preparations thereto; we remember only one distinct period in which all the signs and symptoms burst and effloresced together; Wellington boots, coat tail, cravat, down on the upper lip, thoughts on razors, reveries on young ladies, and a new kind of sense of poetry.

I began now to read steadily, to understand what I did read, and to cast some anxious looks towards the future, with vague notions that I had a place to win in the world, and that nothing is to be won without perseverance and labor; and so I went on till I was seventeen, and at the head of the school, when I received the two letters I subjoin.

1.—FROM AUGUSTINE CAXTON, ESQ.

"MY DEAR SON,—I have informed Dr. Herman that you will not return to him after the approaching holidays. You are old enough now to look forward to the embraces of our beloved Alma Mater, and I think studious enough to hope for the honors she bestows on her worthier sons. You are already entered at Trinity,—and in fancy I see my youth return to me in your image. I see you wandering where the Cam steals its way through those noble gardens; and, confusing you with myself, I recall the old dreams that haunted me when the chiming bells swung over the placid waters. 'Verum secretumque *Mouseion*, quam multa dictatis, quam multa invenitis!' There at that illustrious college, unless the race has indeed degenerated, you will measure yourself with young giants. You will see those who, in the Law, the Church, the State or the still cloisters of Learning, are destined to become the eminent leaders of your age. To rank amongst them you are not forbidden to aspire; he who in youth 'can scorn delight, and love laborious days,' should pitch high his ambition.

"Your Uncle Jack says he has done wonders with his newspaper,—though Mr. Rollick grumbles, and declares that it is full of theories, and that it puzzles the farmers. Uncle Jack, in reply, contends that he creates an audience, not addresses one,—and sighs that his genius is thrown away in a provincial town. In fact, he really is a very clever man, and might do much in London, I dare say. He often comes over to dine and sleep, returning the next morning. His energy is wonderful—and contagious. Can you imagine that he has actually stirred up the flame of my vanity, by constantly poking at the bars? Metaphor apart—I find myself collecting all my notes and commonplaces, and wondering to see how easily they fall into method, and take shape in chapters and books. I cannot help smiling when I add, that I fancy I am going to become an author; and smiling more when I think that your Uncle Jack should have provoked me into so egregious an ambition. However, I have read some passages of my book to your mother, and she says, 'it is vastly fine,' which is encouraging. Your mother has great good sense, though I don't mean to say that she has much learning,—which is a wonder, considering that Pic de la Mirandola was nothing to her father. Yet he died, dear great man, and never printed a line,—while I—positively I blush to think of my temerity!

"Adieu, my son; make the best of the time that remains with you at the Philhellenic. A full mind is the true Pantheism, *plena Jovis*. It is only in some corner of the brain which we leave empty that Vice can obtain a lodging. When she knocks at your door, my son, be able to say, 'No room for your ladyship,—pass on.' Your affectionate father,

"A. CAXTON."

2.—FROM MRS. CAXTON.

"MY DEAREST SISTY,—You are coming home!—My heart is so full of that thought that it seems to me as if I could not write anything else. Dear child, you are coming home;—you have done with school, you have done with strangers,—you are our own, all our own son again! You are mine again, as you were in the cradle, the nursery, and the garden, Sisty, when we used to throw daisies at each other! You will laugh at me so, when I tell you, that as soon as I heard you were coming home for good, I crept away from the room, and went to my

drawer where I keep, you know, all my treasures. There was your little cap that I worked myself, and your poor little nankeen jacket that you were so proud to throw off—oh! and many other relics of you when you were little Sisty, and I was not the cold formal 'Mother' you call me now, but dear 'Mamma.' I kissed them, Sisty, and said, 'my little child is coming back to me again!' So foolish was I, I forgot all the long years that have passed, and fancied I could carry you again in my arms, and that I should again coax you to say 'God bless papa.' Well, well! I write now between laughing and crying. You cannot be what you were, but you are still my own dear son—your father's son—dearer to me than all the world—except that father.

"I am so glad, too, that you will come so soon: come while your father is really warm with his book, and while you can encourage and keep him to it. For why should he not be great and famous? Why should not all admire him as we do? You know how proud of him I always was; but I do so long to let the world know *why* I was so proud. And yet, after all, it is not only because he is so wise and learned,—but because he is so good, and has such a large noble heart. But the heart must appear in the book too, as well as the learning. For though it is full of things I don't understand—every now and then there *is* something I do understand—that seems as if that heart spoke out to all the world.

"Your uncle has undertaken to get it published; and your father is going up to town with him about it, as soon as the first volume is finished.

"All are quite well except poor Mrs. Jones, who has the ague very bad indeed; Primmins has made her wear a charm for it, and Mrs. Jones actually declares she is already much better. One can't deny that there may be a great deal in such things, though it seems quite against the reason. Indeed your father says, 'Why not? A charm must be accompanied by a strong wish on the part of the charmer that it may succeed,—and what is magnetism but a wish?' I don't quite comprehend this; but, like all your father says, it has more than meets the eye, I am quite sure.

"Only three weeks to the holidays, and then no more school, Sisty—no more school! I shall have your room all done freshly, and made so pretty; they are coming about it to-morrow.

"The duck is quite well, and I really don't think it is quite as lame as it was.

"God bless you, dear, dear child. Your affectionate happy mother,

"K. C."

The interval between these letters and the morning on which I was to return home, seemed to me like one of those long, restless, yet half-dreamy days which in some infant malady I had passed in a sick-bed. I went through my taskwork mechanically, composed a Greek ode in farewell to the Philhellenic, which Dr. Herman pronounced a *chef d'œuvre*, and my father, to whom I sent it in triumph, returned a letter of false English with it, that parodied all my Hellenic barbarisms by imitating them in my mother tongue. However, I swallowed the leek, and consoled myself with the pleasing recollection that, after spending six years in learning to write bad Greek, I should never have any further occasion to avail myself of so precious an accomplishment.

And so came the last day. Then alone, and in a kind of delighted melancholy, I revisited each of the old haunts. The robber's cave we had dug one winter, and maintained, six of us, against all the police of the little kingdom. The place near the pales where I had fought my first battle. The old beech stump on which I sate to read letters from home! With my knife, rich in six blades (besides a cork-screw, a pen-picker, and a button-hook), I carved my name in large capitals over my desk. Then night came, and the bell rang, and we went to our rooms. And I opened the window and looked out. I saw all the stars, and wondered which was mine—which should light to fame and fortune the manhood about to commence. Hope and Ambition were high within me;—and yet, behind them, stood Melancholy. Ah! who amongst you, readers, can now summon back all those thoughts, sweet and sad—all that untold, half-conscious regret for the past—all those vague longings for the future, which made a poet of the dullest on the last night before leaving boyhood and school for ever!

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon when the coach set me down at my father's gate. Mrs. Primmins herself ran out to welcome me; and I had scarcely escaped from the warm clasp of her friendly hand, before I was in the arms of my mother.

As soon as that tenderest of parents was convinced that I was not famished, seeing that I had dined two hours ago at Dr. Herman's, she led me gently across the garden towards the arbor. "You will find your father so cheerful," said she, wiping away a tear. "His brother is with him."

I stopped. *His* brother! Will the reader believe it?—I had never heard that he had a brother, so little were family affairs ever discussed in my hearing.

"*His* brother!" said I. "Have I then an Uncle Caxton as well as an Uncle Jack?"

"Yes, my love," said my mother. And then she added, "Your father and he were not such good friends as they ought to have been, and the Captain has been abroad. However, thank heaven! they are now quite reconciled."

We had time for no more—we were in the arbor. There, a table was spread with wine and fruit—the gentlemen were at their dessert; and those gentlemen were my father, Uncle Jack, Mr. Squills, and—tall, lean, buttoned-to-the-chin—an erect, martial, majestic, and imposing personage, who seemed worthy of a place in my great ancestor's "Boke of Chivalrie."

All rose as I entered; but my poor father, who was always slow in his movements, had the last of me. Uncle Jack had left the very powerful impression of his great sealring on my fingers; Mr. Squills had patted me on the shoulder, and pronounced me "wonderfully grown;" my new-found relative had with great dignity said, "Nephew, your hand, sir—I am Captain de Caxton;" and even the tame duck had taken her beak from her wing, and rubbed it gently between my legs, which was her usual mode of salutation, before my father placed his pale hand on my forehead, and, looking at me for a moment with unutterable sweetness, said, "More and more like your mother—God bless you!"

A chair had been kept vacant for me between my father and his brother. I sat down in haste, and with a tingling color on my cheeks and a rising at my throat, so much had the unusual kindness of my father's greeting affected me; and then there came over me a sense of my new position. I was no longer a schoolboy at home for his brief holiday: I had returned to the shelter of the roof-tree to become myself one of its supports. I was at last a man, privileged to aid or soalce those dear ones who had ministered, as yet without return, to me. That is a very strange crisis in our life when we come home "*for good.*" Home seems a different thing: before, one has been but a sort of guest after all, only welcomed and indulged, and little festivities held in honor of the released and happy child. But to come home *for good*—to have done with school and boyhood—is to be a guest, a child no more. It is to share the everyday life of cares and duties—it is to enter into the *confidences* of home. Is it not so? I could have buried my face in my hands, and wept!

My father, with all his abstraction and all his simplicity, had a knack now and then of penetrating at once to the heart. I verily believe he read all that was passing in mine as easily as if it had been Greek. He stole his arm gently round my waist and whispered, "Hush!" Then lifting his voice, he cried aloud, "Brother Roland, you must not let Jack have the best of the argument."

"Brother Austin," replied the Captain, very formally, "Mr. Jack, if I may take the liberty so to call him"—

"You may indeed," cried Uncle Jack.

"Sir," said the Captain, bowing, "it is a familiarity that does me honor. I was about to say that Mr. Jack has retired from the field."

"Far from it," said Squills, dropping an effervescing powder into a chemical mixture which he had been preparing with great attention, composed of sherry and lemon-juice —"far from it. Mr. Tibbets—whose organ of combativeness is finely developed, by the by—was saying"—

"That it is a rank sin and shame in the nineteenth century," quoth Uncle Jack, "that a man like my friend Captain Caxton"—

"*De* Caxton, sir—Mr. Jack."

"De Caxton—of the highest military talents, of the most illustrious descent—a hero sprung from heroes—should have served so many years, and with such distinction, in his Majesty's service, and should now be only a captain on half-pay. This, I say, comes of the infamous system of purchase, which sets up the highest honors for sale as they did in the Roman empire"—

My father pricked up his ears; but Uncle Jack pushed on before my father could get ready the forces of his meditated interruption.

"A system which a little effort, a little union, can so easily terminate. Yes, sir,"—and Uncle Jack thumped the table, and two cherries bobbed up and smote Captain de Caxton on the nose—"yes, sir, I will undertake to say that I could put the army upon a very different footing. If the poorer and more meritorious gentlemen, like Captain de Caxton, would, as I was just observing, but unite in a grand anti-aristocratic association, each paying a small sum quarterly, we could realize a capital sufficient to outpurchase all these undeserving individuals, and every man of merit should have his fair chance of promotion."

"Egad, sir," said Squills, "there is something grand in that—eh, Captain?"

"No, sir," replied the Captain, quite seriously; "there is in monarchies but one fountain of honor. It would be an interference with a soldier's first duty—his respect for his sovereign."

"On the contrary," said Mr. Squills, "it would still be to the sovereigns that one would owe the promotion."

"Honor," pursued the Captain, coloring up, and unheeding this witty interruption, "is the reward of a soldier. What do I care that a young jakanapes buys his colonelcy over my head? Sir, he does not buy from me my wounds and my services. Sir, he does not buy from me the medal I won at Waterloo. He is a rich man, and I am a poor man; he is called—colonel, because he paid money for the *name*. That pleases him; well and good. It would not please me: I had rather remain a captain, and feel my dignity, not in my title, but in the services by which it has ben won. A beggarly, rascally association of stockbrokers, for aught I know, buy *me* a company! I don't want to be uncivil, or I would say damn 'em, Mr.—sir—Jack!"

A sort of thrill ran through the Captain's audience—even Uncle Jack seemed touched, for he stared very hard at the grim veteran, and said nothing. The pause was awkward —Mr. Squills broke it. "I should like," quoth he, "to see your Waterloo medal—you have it not about you?"

"Mr. Squills," answered the Captain, "it lies next to my heart while I live. It shall be buried in my coffin, and I shall rise with it, at the word of command, on the day of the Grand Review!" So saying, the Captain leisurely unbuttoned his coat, and, detaching from a piece of striped ribbon as ugly a specimen of the art of the silversmith (begging its pardon) as ever rewarded merit at the expense of taste, placed the medal on the table.

The medal passed round, without a word, from hand to hand.

"It is strange," at last said my father,

"how such trifles can be made of such value —how in one age a man sells his life for what in the next age he would not give a button! A Greek esteemed beyond price a few leaves of olive twisted into a circular shape, and set upon his head—a very ridiculous headgear we should now call it. An American Indian prefers a decoration of human scalps, which, I apprehend, we should all agree (save and except Mr. Squills, who is accustomed to such things) to be a very disgusting addition to one's personal attractions; and my brother values this piece of silver, which may be worth about five shillings, more than Jack does a gold mine, or I do the library of the London Museum. A time will come when people will think that as idle a decoration as leaves and scalps."

"Brother," said the Captain, "there is nothing strange in the matter. It is as plain as a pike-staff to a man who understands the principles of honor."

"Possibly," said my father, mildly. "I should like to hear what you have to say upon honor. I am sure it would very much edify us all."

CHAPTER II.

MY UNCLE ROLAND'S DISCOURSE UPON HONOR.

"GENTLEMEN," began the Captain, at the distinct appeal thus made to him—"Gentlemen, God made the earth, but man made the garden. God made man, but man re-creates himself."

"True, by knowledge," said my father.

"By industry," said Uncle Jack.

"By the physical conditions of his body," said Mr. Squills. "He could not have made himself other than he was at first in the woods and wilds if he had fins like a fish, or could only chatter gibberish like a monkey. Hands and a tongue, sir; these are the instruments of progress."

"Mr. Squills," said my father, nodding, "Anaxagoras said very much the same thing before you, touching the hands."

"I can't help that," answered Mr. Squills; "one could not open one's lips, if one were bound to say what nobody else had said. But, after all, our superiority is less in our *hands* than the greatness of our *thumbs*."

"Albinus, *de Sceleto*, and our own learned William Lawrence, have made a similar remark," again put in my father.

"Hang it, sir!" exclaimed Squills, "what business have you to know everything?"

"Everything! No; but thumbs furnish subjects of investigation to the simplest understanding," said my father, modestly.

"Gentlemen," recommenced my Uncle Roland, "thumbs and hands are given to an Esquimaux, as well as to scholars and surgeons—and what the deuce are they the wiser for them? Sirs, you cannot reduce us thus into mechanism. Look within. Man, I say, recreates himself. How? BY THE PRINCIPLE OF HONOR. His first desire is to excel some one else—his first impulse is distinction above his fellows. Heaven places in his soul, as if it were a compass, a needle that always points to one end,—viz., to honor in that which those around him consider honorable. Therefore, as man at first is exposed to all dangers from wild beasts, and from men as savage as himself, COURAGE becomes the first quality mankind must honor: therefore the savage is courageous; therefore he covets the praise for courage; therefore he decorates himself with the skins of the beasts he has subdued, or the scalps of the foes he has slain. Sirs, don't tell me that the skins and the scalps are only hide and leather; they are trophies of honor. Don't tell me that they are ridiculous and disgusting; they become glorious as proofs that the savage has emerged out of the first brute-like egotism, and attached price to the praise which men never give except for works that secure or advance their welfare. By and by, sirs, our savages discover that they cannot live in safety amongst themselves, unless they agree to speak the truth to each other: therefore TRUTH becomes valued, and grows into a principle of honor: so, brother Austin will tell us that in the primitive times, truth was always the attribute of a hero."

"Right," said my father: "Homer emphatically assigns it to Achilles."

"Out of truth comes the necessity for some kind of rude justice and law. Therefore men, after courage in the warrior, and truth in all, begin to attach honor to the

elder, whom they intrust with preserving justice amongst them. So, sirs, LAW is born"—

"But the first lawgivers were priests," quoth my father.

"Sirs, I am coming to that. Whence arises the desire of honor, but from man's necessity of excelling—in other words, of improving his faculties for the *benefit* of others,—though unconscious of that consequence, man only strives for their *praise?* But that desire for honor is unextinguishable, and man is naturally anxious to carry its rewards beyond the grave. Therefore, he who has slain most lions or enemies, is naturally prone to believe that he shall have the best hunting fields in the country beyond, and take the best place at the banquet. Nature, in all its operations, impresses man with the idea of an invisible Power; and the principle of honor—that is, the desire of praise and reward—makes him anxious for the approval which that Power can bestow. Thence comes the first rude idea of RELIGION; and in the death-hymn at the stake, the savage chants songs prophetic of the distinctions he is about to receive. Society goes on; hamlets are built; property is established. He who has more than another has more power than another. Power is honored. Man covets the honor attached to the power which is attached to possession. Thus the soil is cultivated; thus the rafts are constructed; thus tribe trades with tribe; thus COMMERCE is founded, and CIVILIZATION commenced. Sirs, all that seems least connected with honor, as we approach the vulgar days of the present, has its origin in honor, and is but an abuse of its principles. If men nowadays are hucksters and traders—if even military honors are purchased, and a rogue buys his way to a peerage—still all arise from the desire for honor, which society, as it grows old, gives to the outward signs of titles and gold, instead of, as once, to its inward essentials,—courage, truth, justice, enterprise. Therefore, I say, sirs, that honor is the foundation of all improvement in mankind."

"You have argued like a schoolman, brother," said Mr. Caxton admiringly; "but still, as to this round piece of silver—don't we go back to the most barbarous ages in estimating so highly such things as have no real value in themselves—as could not give us one oppportunity for instructing our minds?

"Could not pay for a pair of boots," added Uncle Jack.

"Or," said Mr. Squills, "save you one twinge of the cursed rheumatism you have got for life from that night's bivouac in the Portuguese marshes—to say nothing of the bullet in your cranium, and that cork leg, which must much diminish the salutary effects of your constitutional walk."

"Gentlemen," resumed the Captain, nothing abashed, "in going back to those barbarous ages, I go back to the true principles of honor. It is precisely because this round piece of silver has no value in the market that it is priceless, for thus it is only a proof of desert. Where would be the sense of service in this medal, if it could buy back my leg, or if I could bargain it away for forty thousand a-year? No, sirs, its value is this—that when I wear it on my breast, men shall say, 'that formal old fellow is not so useless as he seems. He was one of those who saved England and freed Europe.' And even when I conceal it here" (and, devoutly kissing the medal, Uncle Roland restored it to its ribbon and its resting place), "and no eye sees it, its value is yet greater in the thought that my country has not degraded the old and true principles of honor, by paying the soldier who fought for her in the same coin as that in which you, Mr. Jack, sir, pay your bootmaker's bill. No, no, gentlemen. As courage was the first virtue that honor called forth—the first virtue from which all safety and civilization proceed, so we do right to keep that one virtue at least clear and unsullied from all the money-making, mercenary, pay-me-in-cash abominations which are the vices, not the virtues, of the civilization it has produced."

My Uncle Roland here came to a full stop; and, filling his glass, rose and said solemnly—"A last bumper, gentlemen,—'To the dead who died for England!'"

CHAPTER III.

"INDEED, my dear, you must take it. You certainly *have* caught cold: you sneezed three times together."

"Yes, ma'am, because I would take a pinch of Uncle Roland's snuff, just to say that I *had* taken a pinch out of his box—the honor of the thing, you know."

"Ah, my dear! what was that very clever remark you made at the same time, which so pleased your father—something about Jews and the college?"

"Jews and—oh! '*pulverem Olympicum collegisse juvat*,' my dear mother—which means, that it is a pleasure to take a pinch out of a brave man's snuff-box. I say, mother, put down the posset. Yes, I'll take it; I will, indeed. Now, then, sit here—that's right—and tell me all you know about this famous old Captain. Imprimis, he is older than my father?"

"To be sure!" exclaimed my mother indignantly; "he looks twenty years older; but there is only five years' real difference. Your father must always look young."

"And why does Uncle Roland put that absurd French *de* before his name—and why were my father and he not good friends—and is he married—and has he any children?"

Scene of this conference—my own little room, new papered on purpose for my return *for good*—trellis-work paper, flowers and birds—all so fresh, and so new, and so clean, and so gay—with my books ranged in neat shelves, and a writing-table by the window; and, without the window, shines the still summer moon. The window is a little open—you scent the flowers and the new-mown hay. Past eleven; and the boy and his dear mother are all alone.

"My dear, my dear! you ask so many questions at once."

"Don't answer them, then. Begin at the beginning, as Nurse Primmins does with her fairy tales—'Once on a time.'"

"Once on a time, then," said my mother—kissing me between the eyes—"once on a time, my love, there was a certain clergyman in Cumberland, who had two sons; he had but a small living, and the boys were to make their own way in the world. But close to the parsonage, on the brow of a hill, rose an old ruin, with one tower left, and this, with half the country round it, had once belonged to the clergyman's family, but all had been sold—all gone piece by piece, you see, my dear, except the presentation to the living (what they call the advowson was sold too), which had been secured to the last of the family. The elder of these sons was your Uncle Roland—the younger was your father. Now I believe the first quarrel arose from the absurdest thing possible, as your father says; but Roland was exceedingly touchy on all things connected with his ancestors. He was always poring over the old pedigree, or wandering amongst the ruins, or reading books of knight-errantry. Well, where this pedigree began I know not, but it seems that King Henry II. gave some lands in Cumberland to one Sir Adam de Caxton; and from that time, you see, the pedigree went regularly from father to son till Henry V.; then, apparently from the disorders produced, as your father says, by the Wars of the Roses, there was a sad blank left—only one or two names, without dates or marriages, till the time of Henry VII., except that, in the reign of Edward IV., there was one insertion of a William Caxton (named in a deed).

"Now in the village church there was a beautiful brass monument, to one Sir William de Caxton, who had been killed at the battle of Bosworth, fighting for that wicked King Richard III. And about the same time there lived, as you know, the great printer, William Caxton. Well, your father, happening to be in town on a visit to his aunt, took great trouble in hunting up all the old papers he could find at the Herald's College; and sure enough he was overjoyed to satisfy himself that he was descended, not from that poor Sir William, who had been killed in so bad a cause, but from the great printer, who was from a younger branch of the same family, and to whose descendants the estate came, in the reign of Henry VIII. It was upon this that your Uncle Roland quarrelled with him; and indeed I tremble to think that they may touch on that matter again."

"Then, my dear mother, I must say my uncle was wrong there, so far as common sense is concerned; but still, somehow or

other, I can understand it. Surely this was not the only cause of estrangement?"

My mother looked down, and moved one hand gently over the other, which was her way when embarrassed. "What was it, my own mother?" said I, coaxingly.

"I believe—that is, I—I think that they were both attached to the same young lady."

"How! you don't mean to say that my father was ever in love with any one but you?"

"Yes, Sisty—yes, and deeply! and," added my mother, after a slight pause, and with a very low sigh, "he never was in love with me; and what is more, he had the frankness to tell me so!"

"And yet you"—

"Married him—yes!" said my mother, raising the softest and purest eyes that ever lover could have wished to read his fate in—"Yes, for the old love was hopeless. I knew that I could make him happy. I knew that he would love me at last, and he does so! My son, your father loves me!"

As she spoke, there came a blush as innocent as virgin ever knew, to my mother's smooth cheek; and she looked so fair, so good, and still so young, all the while, that you would have said that either Dusius, the Teuton fiend, or Nock, the Scandinavian sea-imp, from whom the learned assure us we derive our modern Daimones, "The Deuce," and Old Nick, had indeed possessed my father, if he had not learned to love such a creature.

I pressed her hand to my lips, but my heart was too full to speak for a moment or so; and then I partially changed the subject.

"Well, and this rivalry estranged them more? And who was the lady?"

"Your father never told me, and I never asked," said my mother simply. "But she was very different from me, I know. Very accomplished, very beautiful, very high-born."

"For all that, my father was a lucky man to escape her. Pass on. What did the Captain do?"

"Why, about that time your grandfather died, and shortly after an aunt, on the mother's side, who was rich and saving, died, and unexpectedly left them each sixteen thousand pounds. Your uncle, with his share, bought back, at an enormous price, the old castle and some land round it, which they say does not bring him in three hundred a year. With the little that remained, he purchased a commission in the army; and the brothers met no more till last week, when Roland suddenly arrived."

"He did not marry this accomplished young lady?"

"No! but he married another, and is a widower."

"Why, he was as inconstant as my father; and I am sure without so good an excuse. How was that?"

"I don't know. He says nothing about it."

"Has he any children?"

"Two, a son—by the by, you must never speak about *him*. Your uncle briefly said, when I asked him what was his family, 'A girl, ma'am. I had a son, but—'

"'He is dead,' cried your father, in his kind pitying voice.

"'Dead to me, brother—and you will never mention his name!' You should have seen how stern your uncle looked. I was terrified."

"But the girl—why did not he bring her here?"

"She is still in France, but he talks of going over for her; and we have half promised to visit them both in Cumberland. But, bless me! is that twelve? and the posset quite cold!"

"One word more, dearest mother—one word. My father's book—is he still going on with it?"

"Oh yes, indeed!" cried my mother, clasping her hands; "and he must read it to you, as he does to me—*you* will understand it so well. I have always been so anxious that the world should know him, and be proud of him as we are,—so—so anxious!—for, perhaps, Sisty, if he had married that great lady, he would have roused himself, been more ambitious—and I could only make him happy, I could not make him great!"

"So he has listened to you at last?"

"To me!" said my mother, shaking her head and smiling gently: "No, rather to your Uncle Jack, who, I am happy to say, has at length got a proper hold over him."

"A proper hold, my dear mother! Pray beware of Uncle Jack, or we shall be all swept into a coal-mine, or explode with a grand national company for making gunpowder out of tea-leaves!"

"Wicked child!" said my mother, laughing; and then, as she took up her candle and lingered a moment while I wound my watch, she said musingly, —"Yet Jack is very, very clever,—and if for your sake we *could* make a fortune, Sisty!"

"You frighten me out of my wits, mother! You are not in earnest?"

"And if *my* brother could be the means of raising *him* in the world"—

"You brother would be enough to sink all the ships in the Channel, ma'am," said I, quite irreverently. I was shocked before the words were well out of my mouth; and throwing my arms round my mother's neck, I kissed away the pain I had inflicted.

When I was left alone, and in my own little crib, in which my slumber had ever been so soft and easy,—I might as well have been lying upon cut straw. I tossed to and fro—I could not sleep. I rose, threw on my dressing-gown, lighted my candle, and sat down by the table near the window. First I thought of the unfinished outline of my father's youth, so suddenly sketched before me. I filled up the missing colors, and fancied the picture explained all that had often perplexed my conjectures. I comprehended, I suppose by some secret sympathy in my own nature (for experience in mankind could have taught me little enough), how an ardent, serious, inquiring mind — struggling into passion under the load of knowledge, had, with that stimulus, sadly and abruptly withdrawn, sunk into the quiet of passive, aimless study. I comprehended how, in the indolence of a happy but unimpassioned marriage, with a companion so gentle, so provident and watchful, yet so little formed to rouse, and task, and fire an intellect naturally calm and meditative,—years upon years had crept away in the learned idleness of a solitary scholar. I comprehended, too, how gradually and slowly, as my father entered that stage of middle life, when all men are most prone to ambition—the long silenced whispers were heard again; and the mind, at last escaping from the listless weight which a baffled and disappointed heart had laid upon it, saw once more, fair as in youth, the only true mistress of Genius—Fame.

Oh! how I sympathized, too, in my mother's gentle triumph. Looking over the past I could see, year after year, how she had stolen more and more into my father's heart of hearts—how what had been kindness had grown into love,—how custom and habit, and the countless links in the sweet charities of home, had supplied that sympathy with the genial man which had been missed at first by the lonely scholar.

Next I thought of the gray, eagle-eyed old soldier, with his ruined tower and barren acres,—and saw before me his proud, prejudiced, chivalrous boyhood, gliding through the ruins or poring over the mouldy pedigree. And this son, so disowned,—for what dark offence?—an awe crept over me. And this girl—his ewe lamb—his all—was she fair? had she blue eyes like my mother, or a high Roman nose and beetle brows like Captain Roland? I mused, and mused, and mused—and the candle went out—and the moonlight grew broader and stiller; till at last I was sailing in a balloon with Uncle Jack, and had just tumbled into the Red Sea —when the well-known voice of nurse Primmins restored me to life with a "God bless my heart! the boy has not been in bed all this 'varsal night!"

CHAPTER IV.

As soon as I was dressed I hastened down stairs, for I longed to revisit my old haunts —the little plot of garden I had sown with anemones and cresses; the walk by the peach wall; the pond wherein I had angled for roach and perch.

Entering the hall, I discovered my Uncle Roland in a great state of embarrassment. The maid-servant was scrubbing the stones at the hall-door; she was naturally plump,—and it is astonishing how much more plump a female becomes when she is on all-fours! —the maid-servant, then, was scrubbing the stones, her face turned from the captain; and the captain, evidently meditating a

sortie, stood ruefully gazing at the obstacle before him and hemming aloud. Alas, the maid-servant was deaf! I stopped, curious to see how Uncle Roland would extricate himself from the dilemma.

Finding that his hems were in vain, my uncle made himself as small as he could, and glided close to the left of the wall: at that instant, the maid turned abruptly round towards the right, and completely obstructed, by this manœuvre, the slight crevice through which hope had dawned on her captive. My uncle stood stock-still,—and, to say the truth, he could not have stirred an inch without coming into personal contact with the rounded charms which blockaded his movements. My uncle took off his hat and scratched his forehead in great perplexity. Presently, by a slight turn of the flanks, the opposing party, while leaving him an opportunity of return, entirely precluded all chance of egress in that quarter. My uncle retreated in haste, and now presented himself to the right wing of the enemy. He had scarcely done so when, without looking behind her, the blockading party shoved aside the pail that crippled the range of her operations, and so placed it that it formed a formidable barricade, which my uncle's cork leg had no chance of surmounting. Therewith Captain Roland lifted his eyes appealingly to heaven, and I heard him distinctly ejaculate—

"Would to heaven she were a creature in breeches!"

But happily at this moment the maid-servant turned her head sharply round, and, seeing the captain, rose in an instant, moved away the pail, and dropped a frightened curtsey.

My Uncle Roland touched his hat. "I beg you a thousand pardons, my good girl," said he; and, with a half bow, he slid into the open air.

"You have a soldier's politeness, uncle," said I, tucking my arm into Captain Roland's.

"Tush, my boy," said he, smiling seriously, and coloring up to the temples; "tush, say a gentleman's! To us, sir, every woman is a lady, in right of her sex."

Now, I had often occasion later to recall that aphorism of my uncle's; and it served to explain to me how a man, so prejudiced on the score of family pride, never seemed to consider it an offence in my father to have married a woman whose pedigree was as brief as my dear mother's. Had she been a Montmorenci, my uncle could not have been more respectful and gallant than he was to that meek descendant of the Tibbetses. He held, indeed, which I never knew any other man, vain of family, approve or support,—a doctrine deduced from the following syllogisms: 1st, That birth was not valuable in itself, but as a transmission of certain qualities which descent from a race of warriors should perpetuate, viz., truth, courage, honor; 2dly, That, whereas from the woman's side we derive our more intellectual faculties, from the man's we derive our moral; a clever and witty man generally has a clever and witty mother; a brave and honorable man, a brave and honorable father. Therefore, all the qualities which attention to race should perpetuate, are the manly qualities traceable only from the *father's* side. Again, he held that while the aristocracy have higher and more chivalrous notions, the people generally have shrewder and livelier ideas. Therefore, to prevent gentlemen from degenerating into complete dunderheads, an admixture with the people, provided always it was on the female side, was not only excusable, but expedient; and, finally, my uncle held, that, whereas a man is a rude, coarse, sensual animal, and requires all manner of associations to dignify and refine him, women are so naturally susceptible of everything beautiful in sentiment, and generous in purpose, that she who is a true woman is a fit peer for a king. Odd and preposterous notions, no doubt, and capable of much controversy, so far as the doctrine of race (if that be any way tenable) is concerned; but then the plain fact is, that my Uncle Roland was as eccentric and contradictory a gentleman—as—as—why, as you and I are, if we once venture to think for ourselves.

"Well, sir, and what profession are you meant for?" asked my uncle—"not the army, I fear?"

"I have never thought of the subject, uncle."

"Thank heaven," said Captain Roland, "we have never yet had a lawyer in the family! nor a stockbroker, nor a tradesman —ahem!"

I saw that my great ancestor the printer suddenly rose up in that hem.

"Why, uncle, there are honorable men in all callings."

"Certainly, sir. But in all callings honor is not the first principle of action."

"But it may be, sir, if a man of honor pursue it! There are some soldiers who have been great rascals!"

My uncle looked posed, and his black brows met thoughtfully.

"You are right, boy, I dare say," he answered somewhat mildly. "But do you think that it ought to give me as much pleasure to look on my old ruined tower, if I knew it had been bought by some herring-dealer, like the first ancestor of the Poles, as I do now, when I know it was given to a knight and gentleman (who traced his descent from an Anglo-Dane in the time of King Alfred), for services done in Aquitaine and Gascony, by Henry the Plantagenet? And do you mean to tell me that I should have been the same man if I had not from a boy associated that old tower with all ideas of what its owners were, and should be, as knights and gentlemen? Sir, you would have made a different being of me, if at the head of my pedigree you had clapped a herring-dealer; though, I dare say, the herring-dealer might have been as good a man as ever the Anglo-Dane was! God rest him!"

"And for the same reason, I suppose, sir, that you think my father never would have been quite the same being he is, if he had not made that notable discovery touching our descent from the great William Caxton, the printer!"

My uncle bounded as if he had been shot; bounded so incautiously, considering the materials of which one leg was composed, that he would have fallen into a strawberry-bed if I had not caught him by the arm.

"Why, you--you--you young jackanapes," cried the captain, shaking me off as soon as he had regained his equilibrium. "You do not mean to inherit that infamous crotchet my brother has got into his head? You do not mean to exchange Sir William de Caxton, who fought and fell at Bosworth, for the mechanic who sold black-letter pamphlets in the Sanctuary at Westminster?"

"That depends on the evidence, uncle!"

"No, sir, like all noble truths, it depends upon *faith*. Men, nowadays," continued my uncle, with a look of ineffable disgust, "actually require that truths should be proved."

"It is a sad conceit on their part, no doubt, my dear uncle. But till a truth is proved, how can we know that it is a truth?"

I thought that in that very sagacious question I had effectually caught my uncle. Not I. He slipped through it like an eel.

"Sir," said he, "whatever, in Truth, makes a man's heart warmer, and his soul purer, is a belief not a knowledge. Proof, sir, is a handcuff—belief is a wing! Want proof as to an ancestor in the reign of King Richard! Sir, you cannot even prove to the satisfaction of a logician that you are the son of your own father. Sir, a religious man does not want to reason about his religion—religion is not mathematics. Religion is to be felt, not proved. There are a great many things in the religion of a good man which are not in the catechism. Proof!" continued my uncle, growing violent—"Proof, sir, is a low, vulgar, levelling, rascally Jacobin—Belief is a loyal, generous, chivalrous gentleman! No, no—prove what you please, you shall never rob me of one belief that has made me——"

"The finest-hearted creature that ever talked nonsense," said my father, who came up, like Horace's deity, at the right moment. "What is it you must believe in, brother, no matter what the proof against you?"

My uncle was silent, and with great energy dug the point of his cane into the gravel.

"He will not believe in our great ancestor the printer," said I, maliciously.

My father's calm brow was overcast in a moment.

"Brother," said the captain, loftily, "you have a right to your own ideas, but you should take care how they contaminate your child."

"Contaminate!" said my father; and for the first time I saw an angry sparkle flash from his eyes, but he checked himself on the instant: "change the word, my dear brother."

"No, sir, I will not change it! To belie the records of the family!"

"Records! A brass plate in a village

church against all the books of the College of Arms!"

"To renounce your ancestor, a knight who died in the field!"

"For the worst cause that man ever fought for!"

"On behalf of his king!"

"Who had murdered his nephews!"

"A knight! with our crest on his helmet!"

"And no brains underneath it, or he would never have had them knocked out for so bloody a villain!"

"A rascally, drudging, money-making printer!"

"The wise and glorious introducer of the art that has enlightened a world. Prefer for an ancestor, to one whom scholar and sage never name but in homage, a worthless, obscure, jolter-headed booby in mail, whose only record to men is a brass plate in a church in a village!"

My uncle turned round perfectly livid. "Enough, sir! enough! I am insulted sufficiently. I ought to have expected it. I wish you and your son a very good day."

My father stood aghast. The captain was hobbling off to the iron gate; in another moment he would have been out of our precincts. I ran up and hung on him. "Uncle, it is all my fault. Between you and me, I am quite of your side; pray, forgive us both. What could I have been thinking of, to vex you so? And my father, whom your visit has made so happy!"

My uncle paused, feeling for the latch of the gate. My father had now come up, and caught his hand. "What are all the printers that ever lived, and all the books they ever printed, to one wrong to thy fine heart, brother Roland? Shame on me! A bookman's weak point, you know! It is very true—I should never have taught the boy one thing to give you pain, brother Roland; —though I don't remember," continued my father, with a perplexed look, "that I ever did teach it him either! Pisistratus, as you value my blessing, respect as your ancestor, Sir William de Caxton, the hero of Bosworth. Come, come, brother!"

"I am an old fool," said Uncle Roland, "whichever way we look at it. Ah, you young dog! you are laughing at us both!"

"I have ordered breakfast on the lawn," said my mother, coming out from the porch, with her cheerful smile on her lips; "and I think the devil will be done to your liking to-day, brother Roland."

"We have had enough of the devil already, my love," said my father, wiping his forehead.

So, while the birds sang overhead, or hopped familiarly across the sward for the crumbs thrown forth to them, while the sun was still cool in the east, and the leaves yet rustled with the sweet air of morning, we all sat down to our table, with hearts as reconciled to each other, and as peaceably disposed to thank God for the fair world around us, as if the river had never run red through the field of Bosworth, and that excellent Mr. Caxton had never set all mankind by the ears with an irritating invention, a thousand times more provocative of our combative tendencies than the blast of the trumpet and the gleam of the banner!

CHAPTER V.

"BROTHER," said Mr. Caxton, "I will walk with you to the Roman encampment."

The Captain felt that this proposal was meant as the greatest peace-offering my father could think of; for, 1st, it was a very long walk, and my father detested long walks; 2dly, it was the sacrifice of a whole day's labor at the Great Work. And yet, with that quick sensibility, which only the generous possess, Uncle Roland accepted at once the proposal. If he had not done so, my father would have had a heavier heart for a month to come. And how could the Great Work have got on while the author was every now and then disturbed by a twing of remorse?

Half an hour after breakfast, the brothers set off arm-in-arm; and I followed, a little apart, admiring how sturdily the old soldier got over the ground, in spite of the cork leg. It was pleasant enough to listen to their conversation, and notice the contrasts between these two eccentric stamps from Dame Nature's ever-variable mould,—Nature, who casts nothing in stereotype, for I do believe

that not even two fleas can be found identically the same.

My father was not a quick or minute observer of rural beauties. He had so little of the organ of locality, that I suspect he could have lost his way in his own garden. But the Captain was exquisitely alive to external impressions—not a feature in the landscape escaped him. At every fantastic gnarled pollard he halted to gaze; his eye followed the lark soaring up from his feet; when a fresher air came from the hill-top, his nostrils dilated, as if voluptuously to inhale its delight.

My father, with all his learning, and though his study had been in the stores of all language, was very rarely eloquent. The Captain had a glow and a passion in his words which, what with his deep, tremulous voice, and animated gestures, gave something poetic to half of what he uttered. In every sentence of Roland's, in every tone of his voice, and every play of his face, there was some outbreak of pride: but, unless you set him on his hobby of that great ancestor the printer, my father had not as much pride as a homœopathist could have put into a globule. He was not proud even of not being proud. Chafe all his feathers, and still you could rouse but the dove. My father was slow and mild, my uncle quick and fiery; my father reasoned, my uncle imagined; my father was very seldom wrong, my uncle never quite in the right; but, as my father once said of him, "Roland beats about the bush till he sends out the very bird that we went to search for. He is never in the wrong without suggesting to us what is the right." All in my uncle was stern, rough, and angular; all in my father was sweet, polished, and rounded into a natural grace. My uncle's character cast out a multiplicity of shadows, like a Gothic pile in a northern sky. My father stood serene in the light, like a Greek temple at mid-day in a southern clime.

Their persons corresponded with their natures. My uncle's high aquiline features, bronzed hue, rapid fire of eye, and upper lip that always quivered, were a notable contrast to my father's delicate profile, quiet, abstracted gaze, and the steady sweetness that rested on his musing smile. Roland's forehead was singularly high, and rose to a peak in the summit where phrenologists place the organ of veneration, but it was narrow, and deeply furrowed. Augustine's might be as high, but then soft, silky hair waved carelessly over it—concealing its height, but not its vast breadth—on which not a wrinkle was visible. And yet, withal, there was a great family likeness between the two brothers. When some softer sentiment subdued him, Roland caught the very look of Augustine; when some high emotion animated my father, you might have taken him for Roland. I have often thought since, in the greater experience of mankind which life has afforded me, that if, in early years, their destinies had been exchanged—if Roland had taken to literature, and my father had been forced into action—that each would have had greater worldly success. For Roland's passion and energy would have given immediate and forcible effect to study; he might have been a historian or a poet. It is not study alone that produces a writer; it is *intensity*. In the mind, as in yonder chimney, to make the fire burn hot and quick, you must narrow the draught. Whereas, had my father been forced into the practical world, his calm depth of comprehension, his clearness of reason, his general accuracy in such notions as he once entertained and pondered over, joined to a temper that crosses and losses could never ruffle, an utter freedom from vanity and self-love, from prejudice and passion, might have made him a very wise and enlightened counsellor in the great affairs of life—a lawyer, a diplomatist, a statesman, for what I know, even a great general—if his tender humanity had not stood in the way of his military mathematics.

But, as it was—with his slow pulse never stimulated by action, and too little stirred by even scholarly ambition—my father's mind went on widening and widening, till the circle was lost in the great ocean of contemplation; and Roland's passionate energy, fretted into fever by every let and hindrance, in the struggle with his kind—and narrowed more and more as it was curbed within the channels of active discipline and duty—missed its due career altogether; and what might have been the poet, contracted into the humorist.

Yet, who that had ever known ye, could

have wished you other than ye were—ye guileless, affectionate, honest, simple creatures? simple both, in spite of all the learning of the one, all the prejudices, whims, irritabilities, and crotchets of the other? There you are—seated on the height of the old Roman camp, with a volume of the Stratagems of Polyœnus (or is it Frontinus?) open on my father's lap; the sheep grazing in the furrows of the circumvallations; the curious steer gazing at you where it halts in the space whence the Roman cohorts glittered forth. And your boy-biographer standing behind you with folded arms; and,—as the scholar read or the soldier pointed his cane to each fancied post in the war,—filling up the pastoral landscape with the eagles of Agricola and the scythed cars of Boadicea!

CHAPTER VI.

"It is never the same two hours together in this country," said my Uncle Roland, as, after dinner, or rather after dessert, we joined my mother in the drawing-room.

Indeed, a cold drizzling rain had come on within the last two hours; and, though it was July, it was as chilly as if it had been October. My mother whispered to me, and I went out: in ten minutes more, the logs (for we lived in a wooded country) blazed merrily in the grate. Why could not my mother have rung the bell, and ordered the servant to light a fire? My dear reader, Captain Roland was poor, and he made a capital virtue of economy!

The two brothers drew their chairs near to the hearth, my father at the left, my uncle at the right; and I and my mother sat down to "Fox and Geese."

Coffee came in—one cup for the Captain, for the rest of the party avoided that exciting beverage. And on that cup was a picture of —His Grace the Duke of Wellington!

During our visit to the Roman camp, my mother had borrowed Mr. Squills' chaise, and driven over to our market-town, for the express purpose of greeting the Captain's eyes with the face of his old chief.

My uncle changed color, rose, lifted my mother's hand to his lips, and sat himself down again in silence.

"I have heard," said the Captain after a pause, "that the Marquis of Hastings, who is every inch a soldier and a gentleman—and that is saying not a little, for he measures seventy-five inches from the crown to the sole—when he received Louis XVIII. (then an exile) at Donnington, fitted up his apartments exactly like those his majesty had occupied at the Tuileries. It was a kingly attention (my Lord Hastings, you know, is sprung from the Plantagenets), a kingly attention to a king. It cost some money and made some noise. A woman can show the same royal delicacy of heart in this bit of porcelain, and so quietly, that we men all think it a matter of course, brother Austin."

"You are such a worshipper of women, Roland, that it is melancholy to see you single. You must marry again!"

My uncle first smiled, then frowned, and lastly sighed somewhat heavily.

"Your time will pass slowly in your old tower, poor brother," continued my father, "with only your little girl for a companion."

"And the past!" said my uncle; "the past, that mighty world"—

"Do you still read your old books of chivalry, Froissart and the Chronicles, Palmerin of England and Amadis of Gaul?"

"Why," said my uncle, reddening, "I have tried to improve myself with studies a little more substantial. And" (he added with a sly smile) "there will be your great book for many a long winter to come."

"Um!" said my father, bashfully.

"Do you know," quoth my uncle, "that Dame Primmins is a very intelligent woman; full of fancy, and a capital story-teller?"

"Is not she, uncle?" cried I, leaving my fox in a corner. "Oh, if you could hear her tell the tale of King Arthur and the Enchanted Lake, or the Grim White Woman!"

"I have already heard her tell both," said my uncle.

"The deuce you have, brother! My dear, we must look to this. These captains are dangerous gentlemen in an orderly household. Pray, where could you have had the opportunity of such private communications with Mrs. Primmins?

"Once," said my uncle, readily, "when I went into her room, while she mended my stock; and once"—he stopped short, and looked down.

"Once when?—out with it."

"When she was warming my bed," said my uncle, in a half whisper.

"Dear!" said my mother, innocently, "that's how the sheets came by that bad hole in the middle. I thought it was the warming-pan."

"I am quite shocked!" faltered my uncle.

"You well may be," said my father. "A woman who has been heretofore above all suspicion! But come," he said, seeing that my uncle looked sad, and was no doubt casting up the probable price of twice six yards of Holland—"but come, you were always a famous rhapsodist or tale-teller yourself. Come, Roland, let us have some story of your own; something which your experience has left strong in your impressions."

"Let us first have the candles," said my mother.

The candles were brought, the curtains let down—we all drew our chairs to the hearth. But, in the interval, my uncle had sunk into a gloomy reverie; and, when we called upon him to begin, he seemed to shake off with effort some recollections of pain.

"You ask me," he said, "to tell you some tale which my own experience has left deeply marked in my impressions—I will tell you one apart from my own life, but which has often haunted me. It is sad and strange, ma'am."

"Ma'am, *brother?*" said my mother reproachfully, letting her small hand drop upon that which, large and sunburnt, the Captain waved towards her as he spoke.

"Austin, you have married an angel!" said my uncle; and he was, I believe, the only brother-in-law who ever made so hazardous an assertion.

CHAPTER VII.

MY UNCLE ROLAND'S TALE.

"It was in Spain, no matter where or how, that it was my fortune to take prisoner a French officer of the same rank that I then held—a lieutenant; and there was so much similarity in our sentiments that we became intimate friends—the most intimate friend I ever had, sister, out of this dear circle. He was a rough soldier, whom the world had not well treated; but he never railed at the world, and maintained that he had had his deserts. Honor was his idol, and the sense of honor paid him for the loss of all else.

"We were both at that time volunteers in a foreign service—in that worst of service, civil war,—he on one side, I the other,—both, perhaps, disappointed in the cause we had severally espoused. There was something similar, too, in our domestic relationships. He had a son—a boy—who was all in life to him, next to his country and his duty. I, too, had then such a son, though of fewer years." (The Captain paused an instant: we exchanged glances, and a stifling sensation of pain and suspense was felt by all his listeners.) "We were accustomed, brother, to talk of these children—to picture their future, to compare our hopes and dreams. We hoped and dreamed alike. A short time sufficed to establish this confidence. My prisoner was sent to head-quarters, and soon afterwards exchanged.

"We met no more till last year. Being then at Paris, I inquired for my old friend, and learned that he was living at R——, a few miles from the capital. I went to visit him. I found his house empty and deserted. That very day he had been led to prison, charged with a terrible crime. I saw him in that prison, and from his own lips learned his story. His son had been brought up, as he fondly believed, in the habits and principles of honorable men; and, having finished his education, came to reside with him at R——. The young man was accustomed to go frequently to Paris. A young Frenchman loves pleasure, sister, and pleasure is found at Paris. The father thought it natural, and stripped his age of some comforts to supply luxuries to the son's youth.

"Shortly after the young man's arrival, my friend perceived that he was robbed. Moneys kept in his bureau were abstracted he knew not how, nor could guess by whom. It must be done in the night. He concealed himself, and watched. He saw a

stealthy figure glide in, he saw a false key applied to the lock—he started forward, seized the felon, and recognized his son. What should the father have done? I do not ask *you*, sister! I ask these men; son and father, I ask you."

"Expelled him the house," cried I.

"Done his duty, and reformed the unhappy wretch," said my father. "*Nemo repentè turpissimus semper fuit*—No man is wholly bad all at once."

"The father did as you would have advised, brother. He kept the youth; he remonstrated with him; he did more—he gave him the key of the bureau. 'Take what I have to give,' said he: 'I would rather be a beggar than know my son a thief.'"

"Right: and the youth repented, and became a good man?" exclaimed my father.

Captain Roland shook his head. "The youth promised amendment, and seemed penitent. He spoke of the temptations of Paris, the gaming-table, and what not. He gave up his daily visits to the capital. He seemed to apply to study. Shortly after this, the neighborhood was alarmed by reports of night robberies on the road. Men, masked and armed, plundered travellers, and even broke into houses.

"The police were on the alert. One night an old brother officer knocked at my friend's door. It was late: the veteran (he was a cripple, by the way, like myself—strange coincidence!) was in bed. He came down in haste, when his servant woke, and told him that his old friend, wounded and bleeding, sought an asylum under his roof. The wound, however, was slight. The guest had been attacked and robbed on the road. The next morning the proper authority of the town was sent for. The plundered man described his loss—some *billets* of five hundred francs in a pocket-book, on which was embroidered his name and coronet (he was a vicomte). The guest staid to dinner. Late in the forenoon, the son looked in. The guest started to see him: my friend noticed his paleness. Shortly after, on pretence of faintness, the guest retired to his room, and sent for his host. 'My friend,' said he, 'can you do me a favor?—go to the magistrate and recall the evidence I have given.'

"'Impossible,' said the host. 'What crotchet is this?'

"The guest shuddered. '*Peste!*' said he: 'I do not wish in my old age to be hard on others. Who knows how the robber may have been tempted, and who knows what relations he may have—honest men, whom his crime would degrade for ever! Good heavens! if detected, it is the galleys, the galleys!'

"'And what then?—the robber knew what he braved.'

"'But did his father know it?' cried the guest.

"A light broke upon my unhappy comrade in arms: he caught his friend by the hand—'You turned pale at my son's sight—where did you ever see him before? Speak!'

"'Last night, on the road to Paris. The mask slipped aside. Call back my evidence!'

"'You are mistaken,' said my friend, calmly. 'I saw my son in his bed, and blessed him, before I went to my own.'

"'I will believe you,' said the guest; 'and never shall my hasty suspicion pass my lips—but call back the evidence.'

"The guest returned to Paris before dusk. The father conversed with his son on the subject of his studies; he followed him to his room, waited till he was in bed, and was then about to retire, when the youth said, 'Father, you have forgotten your blessing.'

"The father went back, laid his hand on the boy's head and prayed. He was credulous—fathers are so! He was persuaded that his friend had been deceived. He retired to rest, and fell asleep. He woke suddenly in the middle of the night, and felt (I here quote his words)—'I felt,' said he, 'as if a voice had awakened me—a voice that said, "Rise and search." I rose at once, struck a light, and went to my son's room. The door was locked. I knocked once, twice, thrice,—no answer. I dared not call aloud, lest I should rouse the servants. I went down the stairs—I opened the back-door—I passed to the stables. My own horse was there, *not* my son's. My horse neighed; it was old, like myself—my old charger at Mount St. Jean! I stole back, I crept into the shadow of the wall by my

son's door, and extinguished my light. I felt as if I were a thief myself.'"

"Brother," interrupted my mother under her breath, "speak in your own words, not in this wretched father's. I know not why, but it would shock me less."

The Captain nodded.

"Before daybreak, my friend heard the back-door open gently; a foot ascended the stair—a key grated in the door of the room close at hand—the father glided through the dark into that chamber behind his unseen son.

"He heard the clink of the tinder-box; a light was struck; it spread over the room, but he had time to place himself behind the window curtain which was close at hand. The figure before him stood a moment or so motionless, and seemed to listen, for it turned to the right, to the left, its visage covered with the black hideous mask which is worn in carnivals. Slowly the mask was removed; could that be his son's face? the son of a brave man?—it was pale and ghastly with scoundrel fears; the base drops stood on the brow; the eye was haggard and bloodshot. He looked as a coward looks when death stands before him.

"The youth walked, or rather skulked, to the secretaire, unlocked it, opened a secret drawer; placed within it the contents of his pockets and his frightful mask: the father approached softly, looked over his shoulder, and saw in the drawer the pocket-book embroidered with his friend's name. Meanwhile, the son took out his pistols, uncocked them cautiously, and was about also to secrete them when his father arrested his arm. 'Robber, the use of these is yet to come.'

"The son's knees knocked together, an exclamation for mercy burst from his lips; but when, recovering the mere shock of his dastard nerves, he perceived it was not the gripe of some hireling of the law, but a father's hand that had clutched his arm, the vile audacity which knows fear only from a bodily cause, none from the awe of shame, returned to him.

"'Tush, sir,' he said, 'waste not time in reproaches, for, I fear, the *gens-d'armes* are on my track. It is well that you are here; you can swear that I have spent the night at home. Unhand me, old man—I have these witnesses still to secrete,' and he pointed to the garments wet and dabbled with the mud of the roads. He had scarcely spoken when the walls shook; there was the heavy clatter of hoofs on the ringing pavement without.

"'They come!' cried the son. 'Off, dotard! save your son from the galleys.'

"'The galleys, the galleys!' said the father staggering back; 'it is true—he said —"the galleys."'

"There was a loud knocking at the gate. The *gens-d'armes* surrounded the house. 'Open, in the name of the law.' No answer came, no door was opened. Some of the *gens-d'armes* rode to the rear of the house, in which was placed the stable-yard. From the window of the son's room, the father saw the sudden blaze of torches, the shadowy forms of the men-hunters. He heard the clatter of arms as they swung themselves from their horses. He heard a voice cry, 'Yes, this is the robber's gray horse—see, it still reeks with sweat!' And behind and in front, at either door, again came the knocking, and again the shout, 'Open in the name of the law.'

"Then lights began to gleam from the casements of the neighboring houses; then the space filled rapidly with curious wonderers startled from their sleep; the world was astir, and the crowd came round to know what crime or what shame had entered the old soldier's home.

"Suddenly, within, there was heard the report of a firearm; and a minute or so afterwards the front door was opened, and the soldier appeared.

"'Enter,' he said to the *gens-d'armes:* 'what would you?'

"'We seek a robber who is within your walls.'

"'I know it; mount and find him: I will lead the way.'

"He ascended the stairs, he threw open his son's room; the officers of justice poured in, and on the floor lay the robber's corpse.

"They looked at each other in amazement. 'Take what is left you,' said the father. 'Take the dead man rescued from the galleys; take the living man on whose hands rests the dead man's blood!'

"I was present at my friend's trial. The facts had become known beforehand. He

stood there with his gray hair, and his mutilated limbs, and the deep scar on his visage, and the cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast; and when he had told his tale, he ended with these words—'I have saved the son whom I reared for France, from a doom that would have spared the life to brand it with disgrace. Is this a crime? I give you my life in exchange for my son's disgrace. Does my country need a victim! I have lived for my country's glory, and I can die contented to satisfy its laws; sure that, if you blame me, you will not despise; sure that the hands that give me to the headsman will scatter flowers over my grave. Thus I confess all. I, a soldier, look round amongst a nation of soldiers; and in the name of the star which glitters on my breast, I dare the Fathers of France to condemn me!'

"They acquitted the soldier—at least they gave a verdict answering to what in our courts is called 'justifiable homicide.' A shout rose in the court, which no ceremonial voice could still; the crowd would have borne him in triumph to his house, but his look repelled such vanities. To his house he returned indeed, and the day afterwards they found him dead, beside the cradle in which his first prayer had been breathed over his sinless child. Now, father and son, I ask you, do you condemn that man?"

CHAPTER VIII.

My father took three strides up and down the room, and then, halting on his hearth, and facing his brother, he thus spoke—"I condemn his deed, Roland! At best he was but a haughty egotist. I understand why Brutus should slay his sons. By that sacrifice he saved his country! What did this poor dupe of an exaggeration save?—nothing but his own name. He could not lift the crime from his son's soul, nor the dishonor from his son's memory. He could but gratify his own vain pride; and, insensibly to himself, his act was whispered to him by the fiend that ever whispers to the heart of man, 'Dread men's opinions more than God's law!' Oh, my dear brother, what minds like yours should guard against the most is not the meanness of evil—it is the evil that takes false nobility, by garbing itself in the royal magnificence of good." My uncle walked to the window, opened it, looked out a moment, as if to draw in fresh air, closed it gently, and came back again to his seat; but during the short time the window had been left open, a moth flew in.

"Tales like these," renewed my father, pityingly—"whether told by some great tragedian, or in thy simple style, my brother,—tales like these have their uses: they penetrate the heart to make it wiser; but all wisdom is meek, my Roland. They invite us to put the question to ourselves that thou hast asked—'Can we condemn this man?' and reason answers, as I have answered—'We pity the man, we condemn the deed.' We——take care, my love! that moth will be in the candle. We——*whish!—whish—!*" and my father stopped to drive away the moth. My uncle turned, and taking his handkerchief from the lower part of his face, of which he had wished to conceal the workings, he flapped away the moth from the flame. My mother moved the candles from the moth. I tried to catch the moth in my father's straw-hat. The deuce was in the moth! it baffled us all; now circling against the ceiling, now sweeping down at the fatal lights. As if by a simultaneous impulse, my father approached one candle, my uncle approached the other; and just as the moth was wheeling round and round, irresolute which to choose for its funeral pyre, both candles were put out. The fire had burned down low in the grate, and in the sudden dimness my father's soft sweet voice came forth, as if from an invisible being: "We leave ourselves in the dark to save a moth from the flame, brother! shall we do less for our fellow-men? Extinguish, oh! humanely extinguish the light of our reason, when the darkness more favors our mercy." Before the lights were relit, my uncle had left the room. His brother followed him; my mother and I drew near to each other, and talked in whispers.

PART FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

I was always an early riser. Happy the man who is! Every morning, day comes to him with a virgin's love, full of bloom, and purity, and freshness. The youth of Nature is contagious, like the gladness of a happy child. I doubt if any man can be called 'old' so long as he is an early riser, and an early *walker*. And oh, Youth!—take my word of it—youth in dressing-gown and slippers, dawdling over breakfast at noon, is a very decrepit ghastly image of that youth which sees the sun blush over the mountains, and the dews sparkle upon blossoming hedgerows.

Passing by my father's study, I was surprised to see the windows unclosed—surprised more, on looking in, to see him bending over his books—for I had never before known him study till after the morning meal. Students are not usually early risers, for students, alas! whatever their age, are rarely young. Yes; the Great Book must be getting on in serious earnest. It was no longer dalliance with learning: this was work.

I passed through the gates into the road. A few of the cottages were giving signs of returning life; but it was not yet the hour for labor, and no "Good morning, sir," greeted me on the road. Suddenly at a turn, which an overhanging beech-tree had before concealed, I came full upon my Uncle Roland.

"What! you, sir? So early? Hark, the clock is striking five!"

"Not later! I have walked well for a lame man. It must be more than four miles to —— and back."

"You have been to ——: not on business? No soul would be up."

"Yes, at inns, there is always some one up. Ostlers never sleep! I have been to order my humble chaise and pair. I leave you to-day, nephew."

"Ah, uncle, we have offended you. It was my folly, that cursed print—"

"Pooh!" said my uncle, quickly. "Offended me, boy! I defy you!" and he pressed my hand roughly.

"Yet this sudden determination! It was but yesterday, at the Roman Camp, that you planned an excursion with my father, to C—— Castle."

"Never depend upon a whimsical man. I must be in London to-night."

"And return to-morrow?"

"I know not when," said my uncle, gloomily; and he was silent for some moments. At length, leaning less lightly on my arm, he continued—"Young man, you have pleased me. I love that open, saucy brow of yours, on which Nature has written 'Trust me.' I love those clear eyes, that look one manfully in the face. I must know more of you—much of you. You must come and see me some day or other in your ancestors' ruined keep."

"Come! that I will. And you shall show me the old tower—"

"And the traces of the outworks!" cried my uncle, flourishing his stick.

"And the pedigree—"

"Ay, and your great-great-grandfather's armor, which he wore at Marston Moor——"

"Yes, and the brass plate in the church, uncle."

"The deuce is in the boy! Come here, come here; I've three minds to break your head, sir!"

"It is a pity somebody had not broken the rascally printer's, before he had the impudence to disgrace us by having a family, uncle."

Captain Roland tried hard to frown, but he could not. "Pshaw!" said he, stopping, and taking snuff. "The world of the dead is wide; why should the ghosts jostle us?"

"We can never escape the ghosts, uncle. They haunt us always. We cannot think or act, but the soul of some man, who has lived before, points the way. The dead never die, especially since——"

"Since what, boy?—you speak well."

"Since our great ancestor introduced printing," said I, majestically.

My uncle whistled "*Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre.*"

I had not the heart to plague him further.

"Peace!" said I, creeping cautiously within the circle of the stick.

"No! I forewarn you—"

"Peace! and describe to me my little cousin, your pretty daughter—for pretty I am sure she is."

"Peace," said my uncle, smiling. "But you must come and judge for yourself."

CHAPTER II.

Uncle Roland was gone. Before he went, he was closeted for an hour with my father, who then accompanied him to the gate; and we all crowded round him as he stepped into his chaise. When the Captain was gone, I tried to sound my father as to the cause of so sudden a departure. But my father was impenetrable in all that related to his brother's secrets. Whether or not the Captain had ever confided to him the cause of his displeasure with his son—a mystery which much haunted me—my father was mute on that score, both to my mother and myself. For two or three days, however, Mr. Caxton was evidently unsettled. He did not even take to his Great Work, but walked much alone, or accompanied only by the duck, and without even a book in his hand. But by degrees the scholarly habits returned to him; my mother mended his pens, and the work went on.

For my part, left much to myself, especially in the mornings, I began to muse restlessly over the future. Ungrateful that I was, the happiness of home ceased to content me. I heard afar the roar of the great world, and roved impatient by the shore.

At length, one evening, my father, with some modest hums and ha's, and an unaffected blush on his fair forehead, gratified a prayer frequently urged on him, and read me some portions of the Great Work. I cannot express the feelings this lecture created—they were something akin to awe. For the design of this book was so immense—and towards its execution, a learning so vast and various had administered—that it seemed to me as if a spirit had opened to me a new world, which had always been before my feet, but which my own human blindness had hitherto concealed from me. The unspeakable patience with which all these materials had been collected, year after year—the ease with which now, by the calm power of genius, they seemed of themselves to fall into harmony and system—the unconscious humility with which the scholar exposed the stores of a laborious life;—all combined to rebuke my own restlessness and ambition, while they filled me with a pride in my father, which saved my wounded egotism from a pang. Here, indeed, was one of those books which embrace an existence; like the Dictionary of Bayle, or the History of Gibbon, or the *Fasti Hellenici* of Clinton, it was a book to which thousands of books had contributed, only to make the originality of the single mind more bold and clear. Into the furnace all vessels of gold, of all ages, had been cast; but from the mould came the new coin, with its single stamp. And happily, the subject of the work did not forbid to the writer the indulgence of his *naïve*, peculiar irony of humor—so quiet, yet so profound.

My father's book was the "History of Human Error." It was, therefore, the moral history of mankind, told with truth and earnestness, yet with an arch, unmalig-

nant smile. Sometimes, indeed, the smile drew tears. But in all true humor lies its germ, pathos. Oh! by the goddess Moria or Folly, but he was at home in his theme! He viewed man first in the savage state, preferring in this the positive accounts of voyagers and travellers, to the vague myths of antiquity, and the dreams of speculators on our pristine state. From Australia and Abyssinia he drew pictures of mortality unadorned, as lively as if he had lived amongst Bushmen and savages all his life. Then he crossed over the Atlantic, and brought before you the American Indian, with his noble nature struggling into the dawn of civilization, when friend Penn cheated him out of his birthright, and the Anglo-Saxon drove him back into darkness. He showed both analogy and contrast between this specimen of our kind, and others equally apart from the extremes of the savage state and the cultured. The Arab in his tent, the Teuton in his forests, the Greenlander in his boat, the Fin in his reindeer car. Up sprang the rude gods of the north, and the resuscitated Druidism, passing from its earliest templeless belief into the later corruptions of crommell and idol. Up sprang, by their side, the Saturn of the Phœnicians, the mystic Budh of India, the elementary deities of the Pelasgian, the Naith and Serapis of Egypt, the Ormuzd of Persia, the Bel of Babylon, the winged genii of the graceful Etruria. How nature and life shaped the religion; how the religion shaped the manners; how, and by what influences, some tribes were formed for progress; how others were destined to remain stationary, or be swallowed up in war and slavery by their brethren, was told with a precision clear and strong as the voice of Fate.

Not only an antiquarian and philologist, but an anatomist and philosopher—my father brought to bear on all these grave points the various speculations involved in the distinction of races. He showed how race in perfection is produced, up to a certain point, by admixture; how all mixed races have been the most intelligent—how, in proportion as local circumstance and religious faith permitted the early fusion of different tribes, races improved and quickened into the refinements of civilization. He tracked the progress and dispersion of the Hellenes, from their mythical cradle in Thessaly; and showed how those who settled near the seashores, and were compelled into commerce and intercourse with strangers, gave to Greece her marvellous accomplishments in arts and letters—the flowers of the ancient world. How others, like the Spartans, dwelling evermore in a camp, on guard against their neighbors, and rigidly preserving their Dorian purity of extraction, contributed neither artists, nor poets, nor philosophers to the golden treasure-house of mind. He took the old race of the Celts, Cimry, or Cimmerians. He compared the Celt who, as in Wales, the Scotch Highlands, in Bretagne, and in uncomprehended Ireland, retains his old characteristics and purity of breed, with the Celt, whose blood, mixed by a thousand channels, dictates from Paris the manners and revolutions of the world. He compared the Norman in his ancient Scandinavian home, with that wonder of intelligence and chivalry into which he grew, fused imperceptibly with the Frank, the Goth, and the Anglo-Saxon. He compared the Saxon, stationary in the land of Horsa, with the colonist and civilizer of the globe, as he becomes, when he knows not through what channels—French, Flemish, Danish, Welch, Scotch, and Irish—he draws his sanguine blood.

And out from all these speculations, to which I do such hurried and scanty justice, he drew the blessed truth, that carries hope to the land of the Caffre, the hut of the Bushman—that there is nothing in the flattened skull and the ebon aspect that rejects God's law—improvement; that by the same principle which raises the dog, the lowest of the animals in its savage state, to the highest after man—viz., admixture of race—you can elevate into nations of majesty and power the outcasts of humanity, now your compassion or your scorn. But when my father got into the marrow of his theme—when quitting these preliminary discussions, he fell pounce amongst the would-be wisdom of the wise; when he dealt with civilization itself, its schools, and porticos, and academies; when he bared the absurdities couched beneath the colleges of the Egyptians, and the Symposia of the Greeks; when he showed that, even in their own favorite pursuit of meta-

physics, the Greeks were children; and, in their own more practical region of politics, the Romans were visionaries and bunglers;—when, following the stream of error through the Middle Ages, he quoted the puerilities of Agrippa, the crudities of Cardan, and passed, with his calm smile, into the *salons* of the chattering wits of Paris in the eighteenth century, oh! then his irony was that of Lucian, sweetened by the gentle spirit of Erasmus. For not even here was my father's satire of the cheerless and Mesphistophelian school. From this record of error he drew forth the grand eras of truth.

He showed how earnest men never think in vain, though their thoughts may be errors. He proved how, in vast cycles, age after age, the human mind marches on—like the ocean, receding here, but there advancing. How from the speculations of the Greek sprang all true philosophy; how from the institutions of the Roman rose all durable systems of government; how from the robust follies of the north came the glory of chivalry, and the modern delicacies of honor, and the sweet harmonizing influences of woman. He tracked the ancestry of our Sidneys and Bayards from the Hengists, Genserics, and Attilas. Full of all curious and quaint anecdote—of original illustration—of those niceties of learning which spring from a taste cultivated to the last exquisite polish—the book amused, and allured, and charmed; and erudition lost its pedantry now in the simplicity of Montaigne, now in the penetration of La Bruyère. He lived in each time of which he wrote, and the time lived again in him. Ah! what a writer of romances he would have been, if—if what? If he had had as sad an experience of men's passions, as he had the happy intuition into their humors. But he who would see the mirror of the shore, must look where it is cast on the river, not the ocean. The narrow stream reflects the gnarled tree, and the pausing herd, and the village spire, and the romance of the landscape. But the sea reflects only the vast outline of the headland, and the lights of the eternal heaven.

CHAPTER III.

"It is Lombard Street to a China orange," quoth Uncle Jack.

"Are the odds in favor of fame against failure so great? You do not speak, I fear, from experience, brother Jack," answered my father, as he stooped down to tickle the duck under the left ear.

"But Jack Tibbets is not Augustine Caxton. Jack Tibbets is not a scholar, a genius, a wond—"

"Stop," cried my father.

"After all," said Mr. Squills, "though I am no flatterer, Mr. Tibbets is not so far out. That part of your book which compares the crania or skulls of the different races is superb. Lawrence or Dr. Prichard could not have done the thing more neatly. Such a book must not be lost to the world; and I agree with Mr. Tibbets that you should publish as soon as possible."

"It is one thing to write and another to publish," said my father, irresolutely. "When one considers all the great men who have published; when one thinks one is going to intrude one's-self audaciously into the company of Aristotle and Bacon, of Locke, of Herder—of all the grave philosophers who bend over Nature with brows weighty with thought—one may well pause, and—"

"Pooh!" interrupted Uncle Jack; "science is not a club, it is an ocean. It is open to the cockboat as the frigate. One man carries across it a freightage of ingots, another may fish there for herrings. Who can exhaust the sea? who say to intellect, 'the deeps of philosophy are pre-occupied?'"

"Admirable!" cried Squills.

"So it is really your advice, my friends," said my father, who seemed struck by Uncle Jack's eloquent illustrations, "that I should desert my household gods, remove to London, since my own library ceases to supply my wants; take lodgings near the British Museum, and finish off one volume, at least, incontinently."

"It is a duty you owe to your country," said Uncle Jack, solemnly.

"And to yourself," urged Squills. "One must attend to the natural evacuations of the brain. Ah! you may smile, sir; but I have observed that if a man has much in his head,

he must give it vent or it oppresses him; the whole system goes wrong. From being abstracted, he grows stupefied. The weight of the pressure affects the nerves. I would not even guarantee you from a stroke of paralysis."

"Oh, Austin!" cried my mother tenderly, and throwing her arms round my father's neck.

"Come, sir, you are conquered," said I.

"And what is to become of you, Sisty?" asked my father. "Do you go with us, and unsettle your mind for the university?"

"My uncle has invited me to his castle; and in the meanwhile I will stay here, fag hard, and take care of the duck."

"All alone?" said my mother.

"No. All alone! Why Uncle Jack will come here as often as ever, I hope."

Uncle Jack shook his head.

"No, my boy—I must go to town with your father. You don't understand these things. I shall see the booksellers for him. I know how these gentlemen are to be dealt with. I shall prepare the literary circles for the appearance of the book.—In short it is a sacrifice of interest, I know. My Journal will suffer. But friendship and my country's good before all things."

"Dear Jack!" said my mother affectionately.

"I cannot suffer it," cried my father. "You are making a good income. You are doing well where you are; and as to seeing the booksellers—why, when the work is ready, you can come to town for a week and settle that affair."

"Poor dear Austin," said Uncle Jack, with an air of superiority and compassion. "A week! Sir, the advent of a book that is to succeed requires the preparation of months. Pshaw! I am no genius, but I am a practical man. I know what's what. Leave me alone."

But my father continued obstinate, and Uncle Jack at least ceased to urge the matter. The journey to fame and London was now settled; but my father would not hear of my staying behind.

No; Pisistratus must needs go also to town and see the world; the duck would take care of itself.

CHAPTER IV.

We had taken the precaution to send, the day before, to secure our due complement of places—four in all (including one for Mrs. Primmins)—in, or upon, the fast family coach called the Sun, which had lately been set up for the special convenience of the neighborhood.

This luminary, rising in a town about seven miles distant from us, described at first a very erratic orbit amidst the contiguous villages, before it finally struck into the high-road of enlightenment, and thence performed its journey, in the full eyes of man, at the majestic pace of six miles and a half an hour. My father, with his pockets full of books, and a quarto of "Gebelin on the Primitive World" for light reading under his arm; my mother with a little basket, containing sandwiches, and biscuits of her own baking; Mrs. Primmins, with a new umbrella, purchased for the occasion, and a birdcage containing a canary, endeared to her not more by song than age, and a severe pip through which she had successfully nursed it—and I myself, waited at the gates to welcome the celestial visitor. The gardener, with a wheelbarrow full of boxes and portmanteaus, stood a little in the van; and the footman, who was to follow when lodgings had been found, had gone to a rising eminence to watch the dawning of the expected Sun, and apprise us of its approach by the concerted signal of a hankerchief fixed to a stick.

The quaint old house looked at us mournfully from all its deserted windows. The litter before its threshold, and in its open hall; wisps of straw or hay that had been used for packing; baskets and boxes that had been examined and rejected; others, corded and piled, reserved to follow with the footman—and the two heated and hurried serving women left behind standing half-way between house and garden-gate, whispering to each other, and looking as if they had not slept for weeks—gave to a scene, usually so trim and orderly, an aspect of pathetic abandonment and desolation. The Genius of the place seemed to reproach us. I felt the omens were against us, and turned my earnest gaze from the haunts behind with a sigh,

as the coach now drew up with all its grandeur. An important personage, who, despite the heat of the day, was enveloped in a vast superfluity of belcher, in the midst of which galloped a gilt fox, and who rejoiced in the name of "guard," descended to inform us politely, that only three places, two inside and one out, were at our disposal, the rest having been pre-engaged a fortnight before our orders were received.

Now, as I knew that Mrs. Primmins was indispensable to the comforts of my honored parents (the more so, as she had once lived in London, and knew all its ways), I suggested that she should take the outside seat, and that I should perform the journey on foot—a primitive mode of transport, which has its charms to a young man with stout limbs and gay spirits. The guard's outstretched arm left my mother little time to oppose this proposition, to which my father assented with a silent squeeze of the hand. And, having promised to join them at a family hotel near the Strand, to which Mr. Squills had recommended them as peculiarly genteel and quiet, and waved my last farewell to my poor mother, who continued to stretch her meek face out of the window till the coach was whirled off in a cloud like one of the Homeric heroes, I turned within, to put up a few necessary articles in a small knapsack, which I remembered to have seen in the lumber-room, and which had appertained to my maternal grandfather; and with that on my shoulder, and a strong staff in my hand, I set off towards the great city at as brisk a pace as if I were only bound to the next village. Accordingly, about noon I was both tired and hungry; and seeing by the wayside one of those pretty inns yet peculiar to England, but which, thanks to the railways, will soon be amongst the things before the Flood, I sat down at a table under some clipped limes, unbuckled my knapsack, and ordered my simple fare, with the dignity of one who, for the first time in his life, bespeaks his own dinner, and pays for it out of his own pocket.

While engaged on a rasher of bacon and a tankard of what the landlord called "No mistake," two pedestrians, passing the same road which I had traversed, paused, cast a simultaneous look at my occupation, and induced no doubt by its allurements, seated themselves under the same lime-trees, though at the farther end of the table. I surveyed the new-comers with the curiosity natural to my years.

The elder of the two might have attained the age of thirty, though sundry deep lines, and hues formerly florid and now faded, speaking of fatigue, care, or dissipation, might have made him look somewhat older than he was. There was nothing very prepossessing in his appearance. He was dressed with a pretension ill suited to the costume appropriate to a foot-traveller. His coat was pinched and padded; two enormous pins, connected by a chain, decorated a very stiff stock of blue satin, dotted with yellow stars; his hands were cased in very dingy gloves, which had once been straw-colored, and the said hands played with a whalebone cane surmounted by a formidable knob, wich gave it the appearance of a "life-preserver." As he took off a white napless hat, which he wiped with great care and affection with the sleeve of his right arm, a profusion of stiff curls instantly betrayed the art of man. Like my landlord's ale, in that wig there was "no mistake:" it was brought (after the fashion of the wigs we see in the popular effigies of George IV. in his youth) —low over his forehead and was raised at the top. The wig had been oiled, and the oil had imbibed no small quantity of dust; oil and dust had alike left their impression on the forehead and cheeks of the wig's proprietor. For the rest, the expression of his face was somewhat impudent and reckless, but not without a certain drollery in the corners of his eyes.

The younger man was apparently about my own age, a year or two older, perhaps—judging rather from his set and sinewy frame than his boyish countenance. And this last, boyish as it was, could not fail to demand the attention even of the most careless observer. It had not only the darkness, but the character of the gipsy face, with large brilliant eyes, raven hair, long and wavy, but not curling; the features were aquiline, but delicate, and when he spoke he showed teeth dazzling as pearls. It was impossible not to admire the singular beauty of the countenance; and yet, it had that expression at once

stealthy and fierce, which war with society has stamped upon the lineaments of the race of which it reminded me. But, withal, there was somewhat of the air of a gentleman in this young wayfarer. His dress consisted of a black velveteen shooting-jacket, or rather short frock, with a broad leathern strap at the waist, loose white trousers, and a foraging cap, which he threw carelessly on the table as he wiped his brow. Turning round impatiently, and with some haughtiness, from his companion, he surveyed me with a quick, observant flash of his piercing eyes, and then stretched himself at length on the bench, and appeared either to dose or muse, till, in obedience to his companion's orders, the board was spread with all the cold meats the larder could supply.

"Beef!" said his companion, screwing a pinchbeck glass into his right eye. "Beef; —mottled, cowey—humph. Lamb;—oldish —rawish—muttony—humph. Pie;—stalish. Veal?—no, pork. Ah! what will you have?"

"Help yourself," replied the young man peevishly as he sat up, looked disdainfully at the viands, and, after a long pause, tasted first one, then the other, with many shrugs of the shoulders and muttered exclamations of discontent. Suddenly he looked up and called for brandy; and, to my surprise, and I fear admiration, he drank nearly half a tumblerful of that poison undiluted, with a composure that spoke of habitual use.

"Wrong!" said his companion, drawing the bottle to himself, and mixing the alcohol in careful proportions with water. "Wrong! coats of stomach soon wear out with that kind of clothes-brush. Better stick to the 'yeasty foam,' as sweet Will says. That young gentleman sets you a good example," and therewith the speaker nodded at me familiarly. Inexperienced as I was, I surmised at once that it was his intention to make acquaintance with the neighbor thus saluted. I was not deceived. "Anything to tempt *you*, sir?" asked this social personage after a short pause, and describing a semicircle with the point of his knife.

"I thank you, sir, but I have dined."

"What then? 'Break out into a second course of mischief,' as the swan recommends —swan of Avon, sir! No? 'Well, then, I charge you with this cup of sack.' Are you going far, if I may take the liberty to ask?"

"To London."

"Oh!" said the traveller—while his young companion lifted his eyes; and I was again struck with their remarkable penetration and brilliancy.

"London is the best place in the world for a lad of spirit. See life there; 'glass of fashion and mould of form.' Fond of the play, sir?"

"I never saw one."

"Possible!" cried the gentleman, dropping the handle of his knife, and bringing up the point horizontally: "then, young man," he added solemnly, "you have—but I won't say what you have to see. I won't say—no, not if you could cover this table with golden guineas, and exclaim with the generous ardor so engaging in youth, 'Mr. Peacock, these are yours, if you will only say what I have to see!'"

I laughed outright—may I be forgiven for the boast, but I had the reputation at school of a pleasant laugh. The young man's face grew dark at the sound: he pushed back his plate and sighed.

"Why," continued his friend, "my companion here. who, I suppose, is about your own age, he could tell you what a play is! he could tell you what life is. He has viewed the manners of the town: 'perused the traders,' as the swan poetically remarks. Have you not, my lad, eh?"

Thus directly appealed to, the boy looked up with a smile of scorn on his lips—

"Yes, I know what life is, and I say that life, like poverty, has strange bed-fellows. Ask me what life is now, and I say a melodrama; ask me what it is twenty years hence, and I shall say——"

"A farce?" put in his comrade.

"No, a tragedy—or comedy as Molière wrote it."

"And how is that?" I asked, interested and somewhat surprised at the tone of my contemporary.

"Where the play ends in the triumph of the wittiest rogue. My friend here has no chance!"

"'Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley,' hem—yes, Hal Peacock may be witty, but he is no rogue."

"That was not exactly my meaning," said the boy drily.

"'A fico for your meaning,' as the swan says.—Hallo, you, sir! Bully Host, clear the table, fresh tumblers—hot water—sugar—lemon,—and—the bottle's out! Smoke, sir?" and Mr. Peacock offered me a cigar.

Upon my refusal he carefully twirled round a very uninviting specimen of some fabulous havannah—moistened it all over, as a boa-constrictor may do the ox he prepares for deglutition: bit off one end, and lighting the other from a little machine for that purpose which he drew from his pocket, he was soon absorbed in a vigorous effort (which the damp inherent in the weed long resisted) to poison the surrounding atmosphere. Therewith the young gentleman, either from emulation or in self-defence, extracted from his own pouch a cigar-case of notable elegance, being of velvet, embroidered apparently by some fair hand, for "From Juliet" was very legibly worked thereon—selected a cigar of better appearance than that in favor with his comrade, and seemed quite as familiar with the tobacco as he had been with the brandy.

"Fast, sir—fast lad that!" quoth Mr. Peacock, in the short gasps which his resolute struggle with his uninviting victim alone permitted—"nothing but—(puff, puff)—your true—(suck, suck)—syl—syl—sylva—does for him. Out, by the Lord! 'the jaws of darkness have devoured it up;'" and again Mr. Peacock applied to his phosphoric machine. This time patience and perseverance succeeded, and the heart of the cigar responded by a dull red spark (leaving the sides wholly untouched) to the indefatiguble ardor of its woer.

This feat accomplished, Mr. Peacock exclaimed triumphantly, "And now, what say you, my lads, to a game at cards!—three of us—whist and a dummy—nothing better—eh?" As he spoke he produced from his coat pocket a red silk handkerchief, a bunch of keys, a nightcap, a toothbrush, a piece of shaving-soap, four lumps of sugar, the remains of a bun, a razor, and a pack of cards. Selecting the last, and returning its motley accompaniments to the abyss whence they had emerged, he turned up, with a jerk of his thumb and finger, the knave of clubs, and placing it on the top of the rest, slapped the cards emphatically on the table.

"You are very good, but I don't know whist," said I.

"Not know whist—not been to a play—not smoke! Then pray tell me, young man" (said he majestically, and with a frown), "what on earth you *do* know!"

Much consternated by this direct appeal, and greatly ashamed of my ignorance of the cardinal points of erudition in Mr. Peacock's estimation, I hung my head and looked down.

"That is right," renewed Mr. Peacock more benignly; "you have the ingenuous shame of youth. It is promising, sir—'lowliness is young ambition's ladder,' as the swan says. Mount the first step, and learn whist—six-penny points to begin with."

Notwithstanding any newness in actual life, I had had the good fortune to learn a little of the way before me, by those much-slandered guides called novels—works which are often to the inner world what maps are to the outer; and sundry recollections of "Gil Blas" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" came athwart me. I had no wish to emulate the worthy Moses, and felt that I might not have even the shagreen spectacles to boast of, in my negotiations with this new Mr. Jenkinson. Accordingly, shaking my head, I called for my bill. As I took out my purse—knit by my mother—with one gold piece in one corner, and sundry silver ones in the other, I saw that the eyes of Mr. Peacock twinkled.

"Poor spirit, sir! poor spirit, young man! 'This avarice sticks deep,' as the swan beautifully observes. 'Nothing venture, nothing have.'"

"Nothing have, nothing venture," I returned, plucking up spirit.

"Nothing have!—Young sir, do you doubt my solidity—my capital—my 'golden joys?'"

"Sir, I spoke of myself. I am not rich enough to gamble."

"Gamble!" exclaimed Mr. Peacock, in virtuous indignation—"Gamble! what do you mean, sir? you insult me!" and he rose threateningly, and slapped his white hat on his wig.

"Pshaw! let him alone, Hal," said the

boy contemptuously. "Sir, if he is impertinent, thrash him." (This was to me.)

"Impertinent!—thrash!" exclaimed Mr. Peacock, waxing very red; but catching the sneer on his companion's lip, he sat down, and subsided into sullen silence.

Meanwhile I paid my bill. This duty, rarely a cheerful one, performed, I looked round for my knapsack, and perceived that it was in the boy's hands. He was very coolly reading the address which, in case of accidents, I prudently placed on it—"Pisistratus Caxton, Esq., —— Hotel, —— Street, —Strand."

I took my knapsack from him, more surprised at such a breach of good manners in a young gentleman who knew life so well, than I should have been at a similar error on the part of Mr. Peacock. He made no apology, but nodded farewell, and stretched himself at full length on the bench. Mr. Peacock, now absorbed in a game of patience, vouchsafed no return to my parting salutation, and in another moment I was alone on the high-road. My thoughts turned long upon the young man I had left: mixed with a sort of instinctive compassionate foreboding of an ill future for one with such habits, and in such companionship, I felt an involuntary admiration, less even for his good looks than his ease, audacity, and the careless superiority he assumed over a comrade so much older than himself.

The day was far gone when I saw the spires of a town at which I intended to rest for the night. The horn of a coach behind made me turn my head, and, as the vehicle passed me, I saw on the outside Mr. Peacock, still struggling with a cigar—it could scarcely be the same—and his young friend stretched on the roof amongst the luggage, leaning his handsome head on his hand, and apparently unobservant both of me and every one else.

CHAPTER V.

I AM apt—judging egotistically perhaps, from my own experience—to measure a young man's chance of what is termed practical success in life, by what may seem at first two very vulgar qualities; viz., his inquisitiveness and his animal vivacity. A curiosity which springs forward to examine everything new to his information—a nervous activity, approaching to restlessness, which rarely allows bodily fatigue to interfere with some object in view—constitute, in my mind, very profitable stock in hand to begin the world with.

Tired as I was, after I had performed my ablutions, and refreshed myself in the little coffee-room of the inn at which I put up, with the pedestrian's best beverage, familiar and oft-calumniated tea, I could not resist the temptation of the broad, bustling street, which, lighted with gas, shone on me through the dim windows of the coffee-room. I had never before seen a large town, and the contrast of lamp-lit, busy night in the streets, with sober, deserted night in the lanes and fields, struck me forcibly.

I sauntered out, therefore, jostling and jostled, now gazing at the windows, now hurried along the tide of life, till I found myself before a cook-shop, round which clustered a small knot of housewives, citizens, and hungry-looking children. While contemplating this group, and marvelling how it comes to pass that the staple business of earth's majority is how, when, and where to eat, my ear was struck with "'In Troy there lies the scene,' as the illustrious Will remarks."

Looking round, I perceived Mr. Peacock pointing his stick towards an open doorway next to the cook-shop, the hall beyond which was lighted with gas, while, painted in black letters on a pane of glass over the door, was the word "Billiards."

Suiting the action to the word, the speaker plunged at once into the aperture, and vanished. The boy-companion was following more slowly, when his eye caught mine. A slight blush came over his dark cheek; he stopped, and leaning against the door-jambs, gazed on me hard and long before he said—"Well met again, sir! You find it hard to amuse yourself in this dull place; the nights are long out of London."

"Oh," said I, ingenuously, "everything here amuses me; the lights, the shops, the crowd; but, then, to me everything is new."

The youth came from his lounging-place and moved on, as if inviting me to walk;

while he answered, rather with bitter sullenness, than the melancholy his words expressed—

"One thing, at least, cannot be new to you; it is an old truth with us before we leave the nursery—'Whatever is worth having must be bought; *ergo*, he who cannot buy, has nothing worth having.'"

"I don't think," said I, wisely, "that the things best worth having can be bought at all. You see that poor dropsical jeweller standing before his shop-door,—his shop is the finest in the street,—and I daresay he would be very glad to give it to you or me in return for our good health and strong legs. Oh no! I think with my father—'All that are worth having are given to all;—that is, nature and labor.'"

"Your father says that; and you go by what your father says! Of course, all fathers have preached that, and many other good doctrines, since Adam preached to Cain; but I don't see that the fathers have found their sons very credulous listeners."

"So much the worse for the sons," said I, bluntly.

"Nature," continued my new acquaintance, without attending to my ejaculation—"nature indeed does give us much, and nature also orders each of us how to use her gifts. If nature give you the propensity to drudge, you will drudge; if she give me the ambition to rise, and the contempt for work, I may rise—but I certainly shall not work."

"Oh," said I, "you agree with Squills, I suppose, and fancy we are all guided by the bumps on our foreheads?"

"And the blood in our veins, and our mother's milk. We inherit other things besides gout and consumption. So you always do as your father tells you! Good boy!"

I was piqued. Why we should be ashamed of being taunted for goodness, I never could understand; but certainly I felt humbled. However, I answered sturdily—"If you had as good a father as I have, you would not think it so very extraordinary to do as he tells you."

"Ah! so he is a very good father, is he! He must have a great trust in your sobriety and steadiness to let you wander about the world as he does."

"I am going to join him in London."

"In London! Oh, does he live there?"

"He is going to live there for some time."

"Then, perhaps, we may meet. I, too, am going to town."

"Oh, we shall be sure to meet there!" said I, with frank gladness; for my interest in the young man was not diminished by his conversation, however much I disliked the sentiments it expressed.

The lad laughed, and his laugh was peculiar. It was low, musical, but hollow and artificial.

"Sure to meet! London is a large place: where shall you be found?"

I gave him, without scruple, the address of the hotel at which I expected to find my father; although his deliberate inspection of my knapsack must already have apprised him of that address. He listened attentively, and repeated it twice over, as if to impress it on his memory; and we both walked on in silence, till, turning up a small passage, we suddenly found ourselves in a large churchyard,—a flagged path stretched diagonally across it towards the market-place, on which it bordered. In this church-yard, upon a gravestone, sat a young Savoyard; his hurdy-gurdy, or whatever else his instrument might be called, was on his lap; and he was gnawing his crust, and feeding some poor little white mice (standing on their hind-legs on the hurdy-gurdy) as merrily as if he had chosen the gayest resting-place in the world.

We both stopped. The Savoyard, seeing us, put his arch head on one side, showed all his white teeth in that happy smile so peculiar to his race, and in which poverty seems to beg so blithely, and gave the handle of his instrument a turn.

"Poor child!" said I.

"Aha, you pity him! but why? According to your rule, Mr. Caxton, he is not so much to be pitied; the dropsical jeweller would give him as much for his limbs and health as for ours! How is it—answer me, son of so wise a father—that no one pities the dropsical jeweller, and all pity the healthy Savoyard? It is, sir, because there is a stern truth which is stronger than all Spartan lessons—Poverty *is* the master-ill of the world. Look round. Does poverty leave its sign over the graves? Look at

that large tomb fenced round; read that long inscription:—'Virtue'—'best of husbands'—'affectionate father'—'inconsolable grief'—'sleeps in the joyful hope,' etc., etc. Do you suppose these stoneless mounds hide no dust of what were men just as good? But no epitaph tells their virtues; bespeaks their wives' grief; or promises joyful hope to them!"

"Does it matter? Does God care for the epitaph and tombstone?"

"*Datemi qualche cosa!*" said the Savoyard, in his touching patois, still smiling, and holding out his little hand; therein I dropped a small coin. The boy evinced his gratitude by a new turn of the hurdy-gurdy.

"That is not labor," said my companion; "and had you found him at work, you had given him nothing. I too have my instrument to play upon, and my mice to see after. Adieu!"

He waved his hand, and strode irreverently over the graves back in the direction we had come.

I stood before the fine tomb with its fine epitaph: the Savoyard looked at me wistfully.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Savoyard looked at me wistfully. I wished to enter into conversation with him. That was not easy. However, I began:—

PISISTRATUS.—"You must be often hungry enough, my poor boy. Do the mice feed you?"

SAVOYARD puts his head on one side, shakes it, and strokes his mice.

PISISTRATUS.—"You are very fond of the mice; they are your only friends, I fear."

SAVOYARD, evidently understanding Pisistratus, rubs his face gently against the mice, then puts them softly down on a grave, and gives a turn to the hurdy-gurdy. The mice play unconcernedly over the grave.

PISISTRATUS, pointing first to the beasts, then to the instrument.—"Which do you like best, the mice or the hurdy-gurdy?"

SAVOYARD shows his teeth—considers—stretches himself on the grass—plays with the mice—and answers volubly.

PISISTRATUS, by the help of Latin comprehending that the Savoyard says that the mice are alive, and the hurdy-gurdy is not—"Yes, a live friend is better than a dead one. Mortua est hurda-gurda!"

SAVOYARD shakes his head vehemently.—"Nô—nô! Eccellenza, non è morta!" and strikes up a lively air on the slandered instrument. The Savoyard's face brightens—he looks happy: the mice run from the grave into his bosom.

PISISTRATUS, affected, and putting the question in Latin.—"Have you a father?"

SAVOYARD, with his face overcast.—"Nô—Eccellenza!" then pausing a little, he says briskly, "Si si!" and plays a solemn air on the hurdy-gurdy—stops—rests one hand on the instrument, and raises the other to heaven.

PISISTRATUS understands.—The father is like the hurdy-gurdy, at once dead and living. The mere form is a dead thing, but the music lives. Pisistratus drops another small piece of silver on the ground, and turns away.

God help and God bless thee, Savoyard. Thou hast done Pisistratus all the good in the world. Thou hast corrected the hard wisdom of the young gentleman in the velveteen jacket; Pisistratus is a better lad for having stopped to listen to thee.

I regained the entrance to the churchyard—I looked back—there sat the Savoyard, still amidst men's graves, but under God's sky. He was still looking at me wistfully; and when he caught my eye, he pressed his hand to his heart, and smiled. God help and God bless thee, young Savoyard.

PART FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

In setting off the next morning, the Boots, whose heart I had won by an extra sixpence for calling me betimes, good-naturedly informed me that I might save a mile of the journey, and have a very pleasant walk into the bargain, if I took the footpath through a gentleman's park, the lodge of which I should see about seven miles from the town.

"And the grounds are showed too," said the Boots, "if so be you has a mind to stay and see 'em. But don't you go to the gardener, he'll want half-a-crown; there's an old 'oman at the lodge, who will show you all that's worth seeing—the walks and the big cascade—for a tizzy. You may make use of my name," he added proudly—"Bob, boots at the Lion. She be a *h*aunt o' mine, and she minds them that come from me pertiklerly."

Not doubting that the purest philanthropy actuated these counsels, I thanked my shock-headed friend, and asked carelessly to whom the park belonged.

"To Muster Trevanion, the great parliament man," answered the Boots. "You has heard o' him, I guess, sir?"

I shook my head, surprised, every hour, more and more, to find how very little there was in it.

"They takes in the *Moderate Man's Journal* at the Lamb; and they say in the tap there that he's one of the cleverest chaps in the House o' Commons," continued the Boots in a confidential whisper. "But we takes in the *People's Thunderbolt* at the Lion, and we knows better this Muster Trevanion: he is but a trimmer—milk and water,—no *h*orator,—not the right sort,—you understand?"

Perfectly satisfied that I understood nothing about it, I smiled, and said, "Oh yes;" and slipping on my knapsack, commenced my adventures; the Boots bawling after me, "Mind, sir, you tells *h*aunt I sent you!"

The town was only languidly putting forth symptoms of returning life, as I strode through the streets; a pale sickly unwholesome look on the face of the slothful Phœbus had succeeded the feverish hectic of the past night; the artisans whom I met glided by me, haggard and dejected; a few early shops were alone open; one or two drunken men, emerging from the lanes, sallied homeward with broken pipes in their mouths; bills, with large capitals, calling attention to "Best family teas at 4s. a-lb.:" "the arrival of Mr. Sloman's caravan of wild beasts," and Dr. Do'em's "Paracelsian Pills of Immortality," stared out dull and uncheering from the walls of tenantless dilapidated houses, in that chill sunrise which favors no illusion.

I was glad when I had left the town behind me, and saw the reapers in the cornfields, and heard the chirp of the birds. I arrived at the lodge of which the Boots had spoken: a pretty rustic building half-concealed by a belt of plantations, with two large iron gates for the owner's friends, and a small turn-stile for the public, who, by some strange neglect on his part, or sad want of interest with the neighboring magistrates, had still preserved a right to cross the rich man's domains, and look on his grandeur, limited to compliance with a reasonable request mildly stated on the notice-board, "to keep to the

paths." As it was not yet eight o'clock, I had plenty of time before me to see the grounds, and, profiting by the economical hint of the Boots, I entered the lodge, and inquired for the old lady who was *h*aunt to Mr. Bob. A young woman, who was busied in preparing breakfast, nodded with great civility to this request, and, hastening to a bundle of clothes which I then perceived in the corner, she cried, "Grandmother, here's a gentleman to see the cascade."

The bundle of clothes then turned round, and exhibited a human countenance, which lighted up with great intelligence as the grand-daughter, turning to me, said with simplicity—"She's old, honest cretur, but she still likes to earn a sixpence, sir;" and taking a crutch-staff in her hand, while her grand-daughter put a neat bonnet on her head, this industrious gentlewoman sallied out at a pace which surprised me.

I attempted to enter into conversation with my guide; but she did not seem much inclined to be sociable, and the beauty of the glades and groves which now spread before my eyes reconciled me to silence.

I have seen many fine places since then, but I do not remember to have seen a landscape more beautiful in its peculiar English character than that which I now gazed on. It had none of the feudal characteristics of ancient parks, with giant oaks, fantastic pollards, glens covered with fern, and deer grouped upon the slopes; on the contrary, in spite of some fine trees, chiefly beech, the impression conveyed was that it was a new place—a made place. You might see ridges on the lawns which showed where hedges had been removed; the pastures were parcelled out in divisions by new wire-fences; young plantations, planned with exquisite taste, but without the venerable formality of avenues and quincunxes, by which you know the parks that date from Elizabeth and James, diversified the rich extent of verdure; instead of deer, were short-horned cattle of the finest breed—sheep that would have won the prize at an agricultural show. Everywhere there was the evidence of improvement—energy—capital; but capital clearly not employed for the mere purpose of return. The ornamental was too conspicuously predominant amidst the lucrative, not to say eloquently—"The owner is willing to make the most of his land, but not the most of his money."

But the old woman's eagerness to earn sixpence had impressed me unfavorably as to the character of the master. "Here," thought I, "are all the signs of riches; and yet this poor old woman, living on the very threshold of opulence, is in want of a sixpence."

These surmises, in the indulgence of which I piqued myself on my penetration, were strengthened into convictions by the few sentences which I succeeded at last in eliciting from the old woman.

"Mr. Trevanion must be a rich man," said I.

"O ay, rich eno'!" grumbled my guide.

"And," said I, surveying the extent of shrubbery or dressed ground through which our way wound, now emerging into lawns and glades, now belted by rare garden-trees, now (as every inequality of the ground was turned to advantage in the landscape) sinking into the dell, now climbing up the slopes, and now confining the view to some object of graceful art or enchanting nature:—"And," said I, "he must employ many hands here—plenty of work, eh?"

"Ay, ay—I don't say that he don't find work for those who want it. But it ain't the same place it wor in my day."

"You remember it in other hands then?"

"Ay, ay! When the Hogtons had it, honest folk! My good man was the gardener—none of those set-up fine gentlemen who can't put hand to a spade."

Poor faithful old woman.

I began to hate the unknown proprietor. Here clearly was some mushroom usurper who had bought out the old simple hospitable family, neglected its ancient servants, left them to earn tizzies by showing waterfalls, and insulted their eyes by his selfish wealth.

"There's the water all spi'l't—it warn't so in my day," said the guide.

A rivulet, whose murmur I had long heard, now stole suddenly into view, and gave to the scene the crowning charm. As, relapsing into silence, we tracked its sylvan course, under dipping chestnuts and shady limes—the house itself emerged on the opposite side—a modern building of white stone, with

the noblest Corinthian portico I ever saw in this country.

"A fine house, indeed," said I. "Is Mr. Trevanion here much?"

"Ay, ay—I don't mean to say that he goes away altogether, but it ain't as it wor in my day, when the Hogtons lived here all the year round in their warm house, not that one."

Good old woman, and these poor banished Hogtons! thought I: hateful parvenu! I was pleased when a curve in the shrubberies shut out the house from view, though in reality bringing us nearer to it. And the boasted cascade, whose roar I had heard for some moments, came in sight.

Amidst the Alps, such a waterfall would have been insignificant, but contrasting ground highly dressed, with no other bold features, its effect was striking, and even grand. The banks were here narrowed and compressed; rocks, partly natural, partly no doubt artificial, gave a rough aspect to the margin; and the cascade fell from a considerable height into rapid waters, which my guide mumbled out were "mortal deep."

"There wor a madman leapt over where you be standing," said the old woman, "two years ago last June."

"A madman! why," said I, observing, with an eye practised in the gymnasium of the Hellenic Institute, the narrow space of the banks over the gulf—"why, my good lady, it need not be a madman to perform that leap."

And so saying, with one of those sudden impulses which it would be wrong to ascribe to the noble quality of courage, I drew back a few steps, and cleared the abyss. But when from the other side I looked back at what I had done, and saw that failure had been death, a sickness came over me, and I felt as if I would not have re-leapt the gulf to become lord of the domain.

"And how am I to get back?" said I in a forlorn voice, to the old woman, who stood staring at me on the other side—"Ah! I see there is a bridge below."

"But you can't go over the bridge; there's a gate on it; master keeps the key himself. You are in the private grounds now. Dear—dear! the squire would be so angry if he knew. You must go back; and they'll see you from the house! Dear me! dear—dear! What shall I do? Can't you leap back again?"

Moved by these piteous exclamations, and not wishing to subject the poor old lady to the wrath of a master, evidently an unfeeling tyrant, I resolved to pluck up courage and releap the dangerous abyss.

"Oh yes—never fear," said I, therefore. "What's been done once ought to be done twice, if needful. Just get out of my way, will you?"

And I receded several paces over a ground much too rough to favor my run for a spring. But my heart knocked against my ribs. I felt that impulse can do wonders where preparation fails.

"You had best be quick, then," said the old woman.

Horrid old woman! I began to esteem her less. I set my teeth, and was about to rush on, when a voice close beside me said—

"Stay, young man; I will let you through the gate."

I turned round sharply, and saw close by my side, in great wonder that I had not seen him before, a man, whose homely (but not working) dress seemed to intimate his station as that of the head gardener, of whom my guide had spoken. He was seated on a stone under a chestnut-tree, with an ugly cur at his feet, who snarled at me as I turned.

"Thank you, my man," said I joyfully. "I confess frankly that I was very much afraid of that leap."

"Ho! Yet you said, what can be done once can be done twice."

"I did not say it *could* be done, but *ought* to be done."

"Humph! That's better put."

Here the man rose—the dog came and smelt my legs; and then, as if satisfied with my respectability, wagged the stump of his tail.

I looked across the waterfall for the old woman, and to my surprise, saw her hobbling back as fast as she could.

"Ah!" said I, laughing, "the poor old thing is afraid you'll tell her master—for you're the head gardener, I suppose? But I am the only person to blame. Pray say that, if you mention the circumstance at

all!" and I drew out half-a-crown, which I proffered to my new conductor.

He put back the money with a low "Humph—not amiss." Then, in a louder voice, "No occasion to bribe me, young man; I saw it all."

"I fear your master is rather hard to the poor Hogtons' old servants."

"Is he? Oh! humph—my master. Mr. Trevanion you mean?"

"Yes."

"Well, I dare say people say so. This is the way." And he led me down a little glen away from the fall.

Everybody must have observed, that after he has incurred or escaped a great danger, his spirits rise wonderfully—he is in a state of pleasing excitement. So it was with me. I talked to the gardener *à cœur ouvert*, as the French say: and I did not observe that his short monosyllables in rejoinder all served to draw out my little history—my journey, its destination; my schooling under Dr. Herman, and my father's Great Book. I was only made somewhat suddenly aware of the familiarity that had sprung up between us, when, just as, having performed a circuitous meander, we regained the stream and stood before an iron gate, set in an arch of rock-work, my companion said simply—"And your name, young gentleman? What's your name?"

I hesitated a moment; but having heard that such communications were usually made by the visitors of show places, I answered—"Oh! a very venerable one, if your master is what they call a bibliomaniac—Caxton."

"Caxton!" cried the gardener with some vivacity. "There is a Cumberland family of that name—"

"That's mine; and my Uncle Roland is the head of that family."

"And you are the son of Augustine Caxton?"

"I am. You have heard of my dear father, then?"

"We will not pass by the gate now. Follow me—this way;" and my guide, turning abruptly round, strode up a narrow path, and the house stood a hundred yards before me ere I recovered my surprise.

"Pardon me," said I, "but where are we going, my good friend?"

"Good friend—good friend! Well said, sir. You are going amongst good friends. I was at college with your father. I loved him well. I knew a little of your uncle too. My name is Trevanion."

Blind young fool that I was! The moment my guide told his name, I was struck with amazement at my unaccountable mistake. The small insignificant figure took instant dignity; the homely dress, of rough, dark broadcloth, was the natural and becoming deshabille of a country gentleman in his own demesnes. Even the ugly cur became a Scotch terrier of the rarest breed.

My guide smiled good-naturedly at my stupor; and patting me on the shoulder, said—

"It is the gardener you must apologize to, not me. *He* is a very handsome fellow, six feet high."

I had not found my tongue before we had ascended a broad flight of stairs under the portico; passed a spacious hall, adorned with statues and fragrant with large orange-trees; and, entering a small room, hung with pictures, in which were arranged all the appliances for breakfast, my companion said to a lady, who rose from behind the tea-urn, "My dear Ellinor—I introduce to you the son of our old friend Augustine Caxton. Make him stay with us as long as he can. Young gentleman, in Lady Ellinor Trevanion think that you see one whom you ought to know well—family friendships should descend."

My host said these last words in an imposing tone, and then pounced on a letter-bag on the table, drew forth an immense heap of letters and newspapers, threw himself into an arm-chair, and seemed perfectly forgetful of my existence.

The lady stood a moment in mute surprise, and I saw that she changed color from pale to red, and red to pale, before she came forward with the enchanting grace of unaffected kindness, took me by the hand, drew me to a seat next to her own, and asked so cordially after my father, my uncle, my whole family, that in five minutes I felt myself at home. Lady Ellinor listened with a smile (though with moistened eyes, which she wiped every now and then) to my artless details. At length she said—

"Have you never heard your father speak of me—I mean of us—of the Trevanions?"

"Never," said I bluntly; "and that would puzzle me, only my dear father, you know, is not a great talker."

"Indeed! He was very animated when I knew him," said Lady Ellinor, and she turned her head and sighed.

At this moment there entered a young lady, so fresh, so blooming, so lovely, that every other thought vanished out of my head at once. She came in singing, as gay as a bird, and seeming to my adoring sight quite as native to the skies.

"Fanny," said Lady Ellinor, "shake hands with Mr. Caxton, the son of one whom I have not seen since I was little older than you, but whom I remember as if it were but yesterday."

Miss Fanny blushed and smiled, and held out her hand with an easy frankness which I in vain endeavored to imitate. During breakfast, Mr. Trevanion continued to read his letters and glance over the papers, with an occasional ejaculation of "Pish!" "Stuff!"—between the intervals in which he mechanically swallowed his tea, or some small morsels of dry toast. Then rising with the suddenness which characterized his movements he stood on his hearth for a few moments buried in thought; and now that a large brimmed hat was removed from his brow, and the abruptness of his first movement, with the sedateness of his after pause, arrested my curious attention, I was more than ever ashamed of my mistake. It was a careworn, eager, and yet musing countenance, hollow-eyed, and with deep lines; but it was one of those faces which take dignity and refinement from that mental cultivation which distinguishes the true aristocrat, viz., the highly educated, acutely intelligent man. Very handsome might that face have been in youth, for the features, though small, were exquisitely defined; the brow, partially bald, was noble and massive, and there was almost feminine delicacy in the curve of the lip. The whole expression of the face was commanding, but sad. Often, as my experience of life increased, have I thought to trace upon that expressive visage the history of energetic ambition curbed by a fastidious philosophy and a scrupulous conscience; but then all that I could see was a vague, dissatisfied melancholy, which dejected me I knew not why.

Presently Trevanion returned to the table, collected his letters, moved slowly towards the door, and vanished.

His wife's eyes followed him tenderly. Those eyes reminded me of my mother's, as, I verily believe, did all eyes that expressed affection. I crept nearer to her, and longed to press the white hand that lay so listless before me.

"Will you walk out with us?" said Miss Trevanion, turning to me. I bowed, and in a few minutes I found myself alone. While the ladies left me, for their shawls and bonnets, I took up the newspapers which Mr. Trevanion had thrown on the table, by way of something to do. My eye was caught by his own name; it occurred often, and in all the papers. There was contemptuous abuse in one, high eulogy in another; but one passage, in a journal that seemed to aim at impartiality, struck me so much as to remain in my memory; and I am sure that I can still quote the sense, though not the exact words, The paragraph ran somewhat thus:—

"In the present state of parties, our contemporaries have, not unnaturally, devoted much space to the claims or demerits of Mr. Trevanion. It is a name that stands unquestionably high in the House of Commons; but, as unquestionably, it commands little sympathy in the country. Mr. Trevanion is essentially and emphatically *a member of parliament*. He is a close and ready debater; he is an admirable chairman in committees. Though never in office, his long experience of public life, his gratuitous attention to public business, have ranked him high among those practical politicians from whom ministers are selected. A man of spotless character and excellent intentions, no doubt, he must be considered; and in him any cabinet would gain an honest and a useful member. There ends all we can say in his praise. As a speaker, he wants the fire and enthusiasm which engage the popular sympathies.

"He has the ear of the House, not the heart of the country. An oracle on subjects of mere business, in the great questions of

policy he is comparatively a failure. He never embraces any party heartily; he never espouses any question as if wholly in earnest. The moderation on which he is said to pique himself, often exhibits itself in fastidious crotchets, and an attempt at philosophical originality of candor, which has long obtained him, with his enemies, the reputation of a trimmer. Such a man circumstances may throw into temporary power; but can he command lasting influence? No: let Mr. Trevanion remain in what nature and position assign as his proper post—that of an upright, independent, able member of parliament; conciliating sensible men on both sides, when party runs into extremes. He is undone as a cabinet minister. His scruples would break up any government; and his want of decision—when, as in all human affairs, some errors must be conceded to obtain a great good—would shipwreck his own fame."

I had just got to the end of this paragraph, when the ladies returned.

My hostess observed the newspaper in my hand, and said, with a constrained smile, "Some attack on Mr. Trevanion, I suppose?"

"No," said I, awkwardly; for, perhaps, the paragraph that appeared to me so impartial, was the most galling attack of all. "No, not exactly."

"I never read the papers now—at least what are called the leading articles—it is too painful: and once they gave me so much pleasure—that was when the career began, and before the fame was made."

Here Lady Ellinor opened the window which admitted on the lawn, and in a few moments we were in that part of the pleasure-grounds which the family reserved from the public curiosity. We passed by rare shrubs and strange flowers, long ranges of conservatories, in which bloomed and lived all the marvellous vegetation of Africa and the Indies.

"Mr. Trevanion is fond of flowers?" said I.

The fair Fanny laughed. "I don't think he knows one from another."

"Nor I either," said I: "that is, when I fairly lose sight of a rose or a hollyhock."

"The farm will interest you more," said Lady Ellinor.

We came to farm buildings recently erected, and no doubt on the most improved principle. Lady Ellinor pointed out to me machines and contrivances of the newest fashion, for abridging labor, and perfecting the mechanical operations of agriculture.

"Ah, then, Mr. Trevanion is fond of farming."

The pretty Fanny laughed again.

"My father is one of the great oracles in agriculture, one of the great patrons of all its improvements; but, as for being fond of farming, I doubt if he knows his own fields when he rides through them."

We returned to the house; and Miss Trevanion, whose frank kindness had already made too deep an impression upon the youthful heart of Pisistratus the Second, offered to show me the picture-gallery. The collection was confined to the works of English artists; and Miss Trevanion pointed out to me the main attractions of the gallery.

"Well, at least Mr. Trevanion is fond of pictures!"

"Wrong again," said Fanny, shaking her arch head. "My father is said to be an admirable judge; but he only buys pictures from a sense of duty—to encourage our own painters. A picture once bought, I am not sure that he ever looks at it again!"

"What does he then—" I stopped short, for I felt my meditated question was ill-bred.

"What does he like then? you were about to say. Why, I have known him, of course, since I could know anything; but I have never yet discovered what my father does like. No—not even politics, though he lives for politics alone. You look puzzled; you will know him better some day, I hope; but you will never solve the mystery—what Mr. Trevanion likes."

"You are wrong," said Lady Ellinor, who had followed us into the room, unheard by us. "I can tell you what your father does more than like—what he loves and serves every hour of his noble life—justice, beneficence, honor, and his country. A man who loves these may be excused for indifference to the last geranium or the newest plough, or even (though that offends you more, Fanny) the freshest masterpiece by Land-

seer, or the latest fashion honored by Miss Trevanion."

"Mamma!" said Fanny, and the tears sprang to her eyes.

But Lady Ellinor looked to me sublime as she spoke, her eyes kindled, her breast heaved. The wife taking the husband's part against the child, and comprehending so well what the child felt not, despite its experience of every day, and what the world would never know, despite all the vigilance of its praise and its blame, was a picture, to my taste, finer than any in the collection.

Her face softened as she saw the tears in Fanny's bright hazel eyes; she held out her hand, which her child kissed tenderly: and whispering, "'Tis not the giddy word you must go by, mamma, or there will be something to forgive every minute," Miss Trevanion glided from the room.

"Have you a sister?" asked Lady Ellinor.

"No."

"And Trevanion has no son," she said mournfully. The blood rushed to my cheeks. Oh, young fool, again! We were both silent, when the door was opened, and Mr. Trevanion entered.

"Humph," said he, smiling as he saw me —and his smile was charming though rare. "Humph, young sir, I came to seek for you, —I have been rude, I fear: pardon it—that thought has only just occurred to me, so I left my Blue Books, and my amanuensis hard at work on them, to ask you to come out for half an hour,—just half an hour, it is all I can give you—a deputation at One! You dine and sleep here, of course?"

"Ah, sir! my mother will be so uneasy if I am not in town to-night."

"Pooh!" said the member, "I'll send an express."

"Oh, no indeed; thank you."

"Why not?"

I hesitated. "You see, sir, that my father and mother are both new to London: and though I am new too, yet they may want me —I may be of use." Lady Ellinor put her hand on my head, and sleeked down my hair as I spoke.

"Right, young man, right; you will do in the world, wrong as that is. I don't mean that you'll *succeed*, as the rogues say—that's another question; but, if you don't rise, you'll not fall. Now, put on your hat and come with me; we'll walk to the lodge—you will be in time for a coach."

I took my leave of Lady Ellinor, and longed to say something about 'compliments to Miss Fanny;' but the words stuck in my throat, and my host seemed impatient.

"We must see you soon again!" said Lady Ellinor kindly, as she followed us to the door.

Mr. Trevanion walked on briskly and in silence—one hand in his bosom, the other swinging carelessly a thick walking-stick.

"But I must go round by the bridge," said I, "for I forgot my knapsack. I threw it off when I made my leap, and the old lady certainly never took charge of it."

"Come, then, this way. How old are you?"

"Seventeen and a half."

"You know Latin and Greek as they know them at schools, I suppose?"

"I think I know them pretty well, sir."

"Does your father say so?"

"Why, my father is fastidious; however, he owns that he is satisfied on the whole."

"So am I, then. Mathematics?"

"A little."

"Good."

Here the conversation dropped for some time. I had found and restrapped the knapsack, and we were near the lodge, when Mr. Trevanion said, abruptly, "Talk, my young friend, talk: I like to hear you talk—it refreshes me. Nobody has talked naturally to me these last ten years."

The request was a complete damper to my ingenuous eloquence: I could not have talked naturally now for the life of me.

"I made a mistake, I see," said my companion good-humoredly, noticing my embarrassment. "Here we are at the lodge. The coach will be by in five minutes: you can spend that time in hearing the old woman praise the Hogtons and abuse me. And hark you, sir, never care three straws for praise or blame—leather and prunella! praise and blame are *here!*" and he struck his hand upon his breast, with almost passionate emphasis. "Take a specimen. These Hogtons were the bane of the place; uneducated and miserly; their land a wilderness, their village a pig-sty. I come, with capital and

intelligence; I redeem the soil, I banish pauperism, I civilize all around me; no merit in me—I am but a type of capital guided by education—a machine. And yet the old woman is not the only one who will hint to you that the Hogtons were angels, and myself the usual antithesis to angels. And, what is more, sir, because that old woman, who has ten shillings a-week from me, sets her heart upon earning her sixpences—and I give her that privileged luxury—every visitor she talks to goes away with the idea that I, the rich Mr. Trevanion, let her starve on what she can pick up from the sight-seers. Now, does that signify a jot? Good-by. Tell your father his old friend must see him; profit by his calm wisdom; his old friend is a fool sometimes, and sad at heart. When you are settled, send me a line to St. James's Square, to say where you are. Humph! that's enough."

Mr. Trevanion wrung my hand, and strode off.

I did not wait for the coach, but proceeded towards the turn-stile, where the old woman (who had either seen, or scented from a distance, that tizzy of which I was the impersonation)—

> Hushed in grim repose, did wait her morning prey."

My opinions as to her sufferings, and the virtues of the departed Hogtons, somewhat modified, I contented myself with dropping into her open palm the exact sum virtually agreed on. But that palm still remained open, and the fingers of the other clawed hold of me as I stood, impounded in the curve of the turn-stile, like a cork in a patent cork-screw.

"And threepence for Nephy Bob," said the old lady.

"Threepence for nephew Bob, and why?"

"'Tis his parquisites when he recommends a gentleman. You would not have me pay out of my own earnings: for he *will* have it or he'll ruin my bizziness. Poor folk must be paid for their trouble."

Obdurate to this appeal, and mentally consigning Bob to a master whose feet would be all the handsomer for boots, I threaded the stile and escaped.

Towards evening I reached London. Who ever saw London for the first time and was not disappointed? Those long suburbs melting indefinably away into the capital, forbid all surprise. The gradual is a great disenchanter. I thought it prudent to take a hackney-coach, and so jolted my way to the —— hotel, the door of which was in a small street out of the Strand, though the greater part of the building faced that noisy thoroughfare. I found my father in a state of great discomfort in a little room, which he paced up and down like a lion new caught in his cage. My poor mother was full of complaints—for the first time in her life, I found her indisputably crossish. It was an ill time to relate my adventures. I had enough to do to listen. They had all day been hunting for lodgings in vain. My father's pocket had been picked of a new India handkerchief. Primmins, who ought to know London so well, knew nothing about it, and declared it was turned topsy-turvy, and all the streets had changed names. The new silk umbrella, left for five minutes unguarded in the hall, had been exchanged for an old gingham with three holes in it.

It was not till my mother remembered, that if she did not see herself that my bed was well aired, I should certainly lose the use of my limbs, and therefore disappeared with Primmins and a pert chambermaid, who seemed to think we gave more trouble than we were worth—that I told my father of my new acquaintance with Mr. Trevanion.

He did not seem to listen to me till I got to the name *Trevanion*. He then became very pale, and sat down quietly. "Go on," said he, observing I stopped to look at him.

When I had told all, and given him the kind message with which I had been charged by husband and wife, he smiled faintly: and then, shading his face with his hand, he seemed to muse, not cheerfully, perhaps, for I heard him sigh once or twice.

"And Ellinor," said he at last, without looking up. "Lady Ellinor, I mean—she is very, very——"

"Very what, sir?"

"Very handsome still?"

"Handsome! Yes, handsome, certainly; but I thought more of her manner than her face. And then Fanny, Miss Fanny is so young!"

"Ah!" said my father, murmuring in Greek the celebrated lines of which Pope's translation is familiar to all:

"Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground."

"Well, so they wish to see me. Did Ellinor, Lady Ellinor, say that, or her—her husband?"

"Her husband certainly—Lady Ellinor rather implied than said it."

"We shall see," said my father. "Open the window, this room if stifling."

I opened the window which looked on the Strand. The noise—the voices—the trampling feet—the rolling wheels became loudly audible. My father leant out for some moments, and I stood by his side. He turned to me with a serene face. "Every ant on the hill," said he, "carries its load, and its home is but made by the burden that it bears. How happy am I!—how I should bless God! How light my burden! How secure my home!"

My mother came in as he ceased. He went up to her, put his arm round her waist and kissed her. Such caresses with him had not lost their tender charm by custom: my mother's brow, before somewhat ruffled, grew smooth on the instant. Yet she lifted her eyes to his in soft surprise. "I was but thinking," said my father apologetically—"how much I owed you, and how much I love you!"

CHAPTER II.

And now behold us, three days after my arrival, settled in all the state and grandeur of our own house in Russell-street, Bloomsbury: the library of the Museum close at hand. My father spends his mornings in those *lata silentia*, as Virgil calls the world beyond the grave. And a world beyond the grave we may well call that land of the ghosts, a book collection.

"Pisistratus," said my father one evening, as he arranged his notes before him, and rubbed his spectacles. "Pisistratus, a great library is an *awful* place! There, are interred all the remains of men since the Flood."

"It is a burial-place!" quoth my Uncle Roland, who had that day found us out.

"It is an Heraclea!" said my father.

"Please, not such hard words," said the captain, shaking his head.

"'Heraclea was the city of necromancers, in which they raised the dead. Do I want to speak to Cicero? I invoke him. Do I want to chat in the Athenian market-place, and hear news two thousand years old? I write down my charm on a slip of paper, and a grave magician calls me up Aristophanes. And we owe all this to our ancest——"

"Brother!"

"Ancestors, who wrote books—thank you."

Here Roland offered his snuff-box to my father, who, abhorring snuff, benignly imbibed a pinch, and sneezed five times in consequence: an excuse for Uncle Roland to say, which he did five times, with great unction, "God bless you, brother Austin!"

As soon as my father had recovered himself, he proceeded, with tears in his eyes, but calm as before the interruption—for he was of the philosophy of the Stoics:—

"But it is not *that* which is awful. It is the presuming to vie with these 'spirits elect:' to say to them, 'Make way—I too claim place with the chosen. I too would confer with the living, centuries after the death that consumes my dust. I too'—Ah, Pisistratus! I wish Uncle Jack had been at Jericho before he had brought me up to London, and placed me in the midst of those rulers of the world!"

I was busy, while my father spoke, in making some pendent shelves for these "spirits elect;" for my mother, always provident where my father's comforts were concerned, had foreseen the necessity of some such accommodation in a hired lodging-house, and had not only carefully brought up to town my little box of tools, but gone out herself that morning to buy the raw materials. Checking the plane in its progress over the smooth deal, "My dear father," said I, "if at the Philhellenic Institute I had looked with as much awe as you do on the big fellows that had gone before me, I should have stayed, to all eternity, the lag of the Infant Division—"

"Pisistratus, you are as great an agitator

as your namesake," cried my father, smiling. "And so, a fig for the big fellows!"

And now my mother entered in her pretty evening cap, all smiles and good humor, having just arranged a room for Uncle Roland, concluded advantageous negotiations with the laundress, held high council with Mrs. Primmins on the best mode of defeating the extortions of London tradesmen; and, pleased with herself and all the world, she kissed my father's forehead as it bent over his notes; and came to the tea-table, which only waited its presiding deity. My Uncle Roland, with his usual gallantry, started up, kettle in hand (our own urn—for we had one—not being yet unpacked), and having performed, with soldier-like method, the chivalrous office thus volunteered, he joined me at my employment, and said—

"There is a better steel for the hands of a well-born lad than a carpenter's plane—"

"Aha! uncle—that depends—"

"Depends! what on?"

"On the use one makes of it. Peter the Great was better employed in making ships than Charles XII. in cutting throats."

"Poor Charles XII.!" said my uncle, sighing pathetically—"a very brave fellow!"

"Pity he did not like the ladies a little better!"

"No man is perfect!" said my uncle sententiously. "But, seriously, you are *now* the male hope of the family—you are now—" my uncle stopped and his face darkened. I saw that he thought of his son—that mysterious son! And, looking at him tenderly, I observed that his deep lines had grown deeper, has iron-gray hair more gray. There was the trace of recent suffering on his face; and though he had not spoken to us a word of the business on which he had left us, it required no penetration to perceive that it had come to no successful issue.

My uncle resumed—"Time out of mind, every generation of our house has given one soldier to his country. I look round now: only one branch is budding yet on the old tree; and—"

"Ah! uncle. But what would *they* say? Do you think I should not like to be a soldier? Don't tempt me!"

My uncle had recourse to his snuff-box: and at that moment, unfortunately, perhaps, for the laurels that might otherwise have wreathed the brows of Pisistratus of England, private conversation was stopped by the sudden and noisy entrance of Uncle Jack. No apparition could have been more unexpected.

"Here I am, my dear friends. How d'ye do—how are you all? Captain de Caxton, yours heartily. Yes, I am released, thank heaven! I have given up the drudgery of that pitiful provincial paper. I was not made for it. An ocean in a tea-cup! I was indeed—little, sordid, narrow interests—and I, whose heart embraces all humanity. You might as well turn a circle into an isolated triangle."

"Isosceles!" said my father, sighing as he pushed aside his notes, and very slowly becoming aware of the eloquence that destroyed all chance of further progress that night in the Great Book. "Isosceles triangle, Jack Tibbets—not isolated."

"Isosceles or isolated, it is all one," said Uncle Jack, as he rapidly performed three evolutions, by no means consistent with his favorite theory of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number:'—first, he emptied into the cup which he took from my mother's hands, half the thrifty contents of a London cream-jug; secondly, he reduced the circle of a muffin, by the abstraction of three triangles, to as nearly an isosceles as possible; and thirdly, striding towards the fire, lighted in consideration of Captain de Caxton, and hooking his coat-tails under his arms, while he sipped his tea, he permitted another circle peculiar to humanity wholly to eclipse the luminary it approached.

"Isolated or isosceles, it is all the same thing. Man is made for his fellow-creatures. I had long been disgusted with the interference of those selfish Squirearchs. Your departure decided me. I have concluded negotiations with a London firm of spirit and capital, and extended views of philanthropy. On Saturday last I retired from the service of the oligarchy. I am now in my true capacity of protector of the million. My prospectus is printed—here it is in my pocket.—Another cup of tea, sister, little more cream and another muffin. Shall I ring?" Having disembarrassed himself of his cup and saucer, Uncle Jack then drew forth from his pocket

a damp sheet of printed paper. In large capitals stood out "The ANTI-MONOPOLY GAZETTE, or POPULAR CHAMPION." He waved it triumphantly before my father's eyes.

"Pisistratus," said my father, "look here. This is the way your Uncle Jack now prints his pats of butter.—A cap of liberty growing out of an open book! Good! Jack—good! good!"

"It is Jacobinical!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Very likely," said my father; "but knowledge and freedom are the best devices in the world, to print upon pats of butter intended for the market."

"Pats of butter! I don't understand," said Uncle Jack.

"The less you understand, the better will the butter sell, Jack," said my father, settling back to his notes.

CHAPTER III.

UNCLE JACK had made up his mind to lodge with us, and my mother found some difficulty in inducing him to comprehend that there was no bed to spare.

"That's unlucky," said he. "I had no sooner arrived in town than I was pestered with invitations; but I refused them all, and kept myself for you."

"So kind in you! so like you!" said my mother; "but you see——"

"Well, then, I must be off and find a room. Don't fret, you know I can breakfast and dine with you, all the same; that is, when my other friends will let me. I shall be dreadfully persecuted." So saying, Uncle Jack repocketed his prospectus, and wished us good-night.

The clock had struck eleven; my mother had retired; when my father looked up from his books, and returned his spectacles to their case. I had finished my work, and was seated over the fire, thinking now of Fanny Trevanion's hazel eyes—now, with a heart that beat as high at the thought, of campaigns, battle-fields, laurels, and glory; while, with his arms folded on his breast and his head drooping, Uncle Roland gazed into the low clear embers. My father cast his eyes round the room, and, after surveying his brother for some moments, he said, almost in a whisper—

"My son has seen the Trevanions. They remember us, Roland."

The Captain sprang to his feet, and began whistling; a habit with him when he was much disturbed.

"And Trevanion wishes to see us. Pisistratus promised to give him our address; shall he do so, Roland?"

"If you like it," answered the Captain, in a military attitude, and drawing himself up till he looked seven feet high.

"I *should* like it," said my father, mildly. "Twenty years since we met."

"More than twenty," said my uncle, with a stern smile; "and the season was—the fall of the leaf!"

"Man renews the fibre and material of his body every seven years," said my father; "in three times seven years he has time to renew the inner man. Can two passengers in yonder street be more unlike each other, than the soul is to the soul after an interval of twenty years? Brother, the plough does not pass over the soil in vain, nor care over the human heart. New crops change the character of the land; and the plough must go deep indeed before it stirs up the mother-stone."

"Let us see Trevanion," cried my uncle: then, turning to me, he said, abruptly, "what family has he?"

"One daughter."

"No son?"

"No."

"That must vex the poor foolish ambitious man. Oho! you admire this Mr. Trevanion much, eh? Yes, that fire of manner, his fine words, and bold thoughts, were made to dazzle youth."

"Fine words, my dear uncle!—fire! I should have said, in hearing Mr. Trevanion, that his style of conversation was so homely, you would wonder how he could have won such fame as a public speaker."

"Indeed!"

"The plough has passed there," said my father.

"But not the plough of care: rich, famous Ellinor his wife, and no son!"

"It is because his heart is sometimes sad that he would see us."

Roland stared first at my father, next at me. "Then," quoth my uncle heartily, "in God's name, let him come. I can shake him by the hand, as I would a brother soldier. Poor Trevanion! Write to him at once, Sisty."

I sat down and obeyed. When I had sealed my letter, I looked up, and saw that Roland was lighting his bed-candle at my father's table; and my father, taking his hand, said something to him in a low voice. I guessed it related to his son, for he shook his head, and answered in a stern, hollow voice, "Renew grief if you please—not shame. On that subject—silence!"

CHAPTER IV.

Left to myself in the earlier part of the day, I wandered, wistful and lonely, through the vast wilderness of London. By degrees I familiarized myself with that populous solitude. I ceased to pine for the green fields. That active energy all around, at first saddening, became soon exhilarating, and at last contagious. To an industrious mind, nothing is so catching as industry. I began to grow weary of my golden holiday of unlaborious childhood, to sigh for toil, to look around me for a career. The University, which I had before anticipated with pleasure, seemed now to fade into a dull monastic prospect: after having trod the streets of London, to wander through cloisters was to go back in life. Day by day, my mind grew sensibly within me; it came out from the rosy twilight of boyhood—it felt the doom of Cain, under the broad sun of man.

Uncle Jack soon became absorbed in his new speculation for the good of the human race, and, except at meals (whereat, to do him justice, he was punctual enough, though he did not keep us in ignorance of the sacrifices he made, and the invitations he refused, for our sake), we seldom saw him. The Captain, too, generally vanished after breakfast, seldom dined with us, and it was often late before he returned. He had the latch-key of the house, and let himself in when he pleased. Sometimes (for his chamber was next to mine) his step on the stairs awoke me; and sometimes I heard him pace his room with perturbed strides, or fancied that I caught a low groan. He became every day more care-worn in appearance, and every day the hair seemed more gray. Yet he talked to us all easily and cheerfully; and I thought that I was the only one in the house who perceived the gnawing pangs over which the stout old Spartan drew the decorous cloak.

Pity, blended with admiration, made me curious to learn how these absent days that brought nights so disturbed, were consumed. I felt that, if I could master the Captain's secret, I might win the right both to comfort and to aid.

I resolved at length, after many conscientious scruples, to endeavor to satisfy a curiosity, excused by its motives.

Accordingly, one morning, after watching him from the house, I stole in his track, and followed him at a distance.

And this was the outline of his day. He set off at first with a firm stride, despite his lameness—his gaunt figure erect, the soldierly chest well thrown out from the threadbare but speckless coat. First, he took his way towards the purlieus of Leicester Square; several times, to and fro, did he pace the Isthmus that leads from Piccadilly into that reservoir of foreigners, and the lanes and courts that start thence towards St. Martin's. After an hour or two so passed, the step became more slow; and often the sleek, napless hat was lifted up, and the brow wiped. At length he bent his way towards the two great theatres, paused before the play-bills, as if deliberating seriously on the chances of entertainment they severally proffered, wandered slowly through the small streets that surround those temples of the Muse, and finally emerged into the Strand. There he rested himself for an hour, at a small cook-shop; and, as I passed the window and glanced within, I could see him seated before the simple dinner, which he scarcely touched, and poring over the advertisement columns of the *Times*. The *Times* finished, and a few morsels distastefully swallowed, the Captain put down his shilling

in silence, receiving his pence in exchange, and I had just time to slip aside as he reappeared at the threshold. He looked round as he lingered, but I took care he should not detect me; and then struck off towards the more fashionable quarters of the town.

It was now the afternoon, and, though not yet the season, the streets swarmed with life. As he came into Waterloo Place, a slight but muscular figure, buttoned up across the breast, like his own, cantered by on a handsome bay horse—every eye was on that figure. Uncle Roland stopped short, and lifted his hand to his hat; the rider touched his own with his forefinger, and cantered on—Uncle Roland turned round and gazed.

"Who," I asked, of a shop-boy just before me, also staring with all his eyes—"who is that gentleman on horseback?"

"Why, the Duke to be sure," said the boy contemptuously.

"The Duke?"

"Wellington—stu-pid!"

"Thank you," said I, meekly. Uncle Roland had moved on into Regent Street, but with a brisker step: the sight of the old chief had done the old soldier good. Here again he paced to and fro; till I, watching him from the other side of the way, was ready to drop with fatigue, stout walker though I was. But the Captain's day was not half done. He took out his watch, put it to his ear, and then, replacing it, passed into Bond Street, and thence into Hyde Park. There, evidently wearied out, he leant against the rails, near the bronze statue, in an attitude that spoke despondency. I seated myself on the grass near the statue, and gazed at him: the park was empty compared with the streets, but still there were some equestrian idlers, and many foot-loungers. My uncle's eye turned wistfully on each: once or twice, some gentleman of a military aspect (which I had already learned to detect) stopped, looked at him, approached, and spoke; but the Captain seemed as if ashamed of such greetings. He answered shortly, and turned again.

The day waned—evening came on—the Captain again looked at his watch—shook his head, and made his way to a bench, where he sat perfectly motionless; his hat over his brows, his arms folded; till uprose the moon. I had tasted nothing since breakfast; I was famished, but I still kept my post like an old Roman sentinel.

At length the Captain rose, and re-entered Piccadilly; but how different his mien and bearing! languid, stooping, his chest sunk—his head inclined—his limbs dragging one after the other, his lameness painfully perceptible. What a contrast in the broken invalid at night from the stalwart veteran of the morning!

How I longed to spring forward to offer my arm! but I did not dare.

The Captain stopped near a cab-stand. He put his hand in his pocket—he drew out his purse—he passed his fingers over the network; the purse slipped again into the pocket, and, as if with a heroic effort, my uncle drew up his head, and walked on sturdily.

"Where next?" thought I. "Surely home! No, he is pitiless!"

The Captain stopped not till he arrived at one of the small theatres in the Strand; then he read the bill, and asked if half-price was begun. "Just begun," was the answer, and the Captain entered. I also took a ticket and followed. Passing by the open doors of a refreshment room, I fortified myself with some biscuits and soda-water. And in another minute, for the first time in my life, I beheld a play. But the play did not fascinate me. It was the middle of some jocular after-piece; roars of laughter resounded round me. I could detect nothing to laugh at, and sending my keen eyes into every corner, I perceived at last, in the uppermost tier, one face as saturnine as my own. *Eureka!* It was the Captain's! "Why should he go to a play if he enjoys it so little!" thought I; "better have spent a shilling on a cab, poor old fellow!"

But soon came smart-looking men, and still smarter-looking ladies, around the solitary corner of the poor Captain. He grew fidgety—he rose—he vanished. I left my place, and stood without the box to watch for him. Down stairs he stumped—I recoiled into the shade; and after standing a moment or two, as in doubt, he entered boldly the refreshment room or saloon.

Now, since I had left that saloon, it had become crowded, and I slipped in unobserved. Strange was it, grotesque, yet pa-

thetic, to mark the old soldier in the midst of that gay swarm. He towered above all like a Homeric hero, a head taller than the tallest; and his appearance was so remarkable, that it invited the instant attention of the fair. I, in my simplicity, thought it was the natural tenderness of that amiable and penetrating sex, ever quick to detect trouble and anxious to relieve it, which induced three ladies, in silk attire—one having a hat and plume, the other two with a profusion of ringlets—to leave a little knot of gentlemen with whom they were conversing, and to plant themselves before my uncle. I advanced through the press to hear what passed.

"You are looking for some one, I'm sure," quoth one familiarly, tapping his arm with her fan.

The Captain started. "Ma'am, you are not wrong," said he.

"Can I do as well?" said one of those compassionate angels, with heavenly sweetness.

"You are very kind, I thank you; no, no, ma'am," said the Captain with his best bow.

"Do take a glass of negus," said another, as her friend gave way to her. "You seem tired, and so am I. Here this way;" and she took hold of his arm to lead him to the table. The Captain shook his head mournfully; and then, as if suddenly aware of the nature of the attentions so lavished on him, he looked down upon these fair Armidas with a look of such mild reproach—such sweet compassion—not shaking off the hand, in his chivalrous devotion to the sex which extended even to all its outcasts—that each bold eye fell abashed. The hand was timidly and involuntarily withdrawn from the arm and my uncle passed his way.

He threaded the crowd, passed out at the further door, and I, guessing his intention, was in waiting for his steps in the street.

"Now home at last, thank heaven!" thought I. Mistaken still! My uncle went first towards that popular haunt, which I have since discovered is called "the Shades;" but he soon re-emerged, and finally he knocked at the door of a private house, in one of the streets out of St. James's. It was opened jealously, and closed as he entered, leaving me without. What could this house be! As I stood and watched, some other men approached,—again the low single knock,—again the jealous opening, and the stealthy entrance.

A policeman passed and repassed me. "Don't be tempted, young man," said he, looking hard at me: "take my advice, and go home."

"What is that house, then?" said I, with a sort of shudder at this ominous warning.

"Oh, you know."

"Not I. I am new to London."

"It is a hell," said the policeman—satisfied, by my frank manner, that I spoke the truth.

"God bless me—a what! I could not have heard you rightly?"

"A hell; a gambling-house!"

"Oh!" and I moved on. Could Captain Roland, the rigid, the thrifty, the penurious, be a gambler? The light broke on me at once: the unhappy father sought his son! I leant against the post, and tried hard not to sob.

By and by, I heard the door open: the Captain came out and took the way homeward. I ran on before, and got in first, to the inexpressible relief both of father and mother, who had not seen me since breakfast, and who were in equal consternation at my absence. I submitted to be scolded with a good grace. "I had been sight-seeing, and lost my way;" begged for some supper, and slunk to bed; and five minutes afterwards the Captain's jaded step came wearily up the stairs.

PART SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

"I DON'T know that," said my father.

What is it my father does not know? My father does not know that "happiness is our being's end and aim."

And pertinent to what does my father reply, by words so sceptical, to an assertion so seldom disputed?

Reader, Mr. Trevanion has been half an hour seated in our little drawing-room. He has received two cups of tea from my mother's fair hand; he has made himself at home. With Mr. Trevanion has come another old friend of my father's, whom he has not seen since he left college—Sir Sedley Beaudesert.

Now, you must understand that it is a warm night, a little after nine o'clock—a night between departing summer and approaching autumn. The windows are open—we have a balcony, which my mother has taken care to fill with flowers—the air, though we are in London, is sweet and fresh—the street quiet, that except an occasional carriage or hackney cabriolet rolls rapidly by—a few stealthy passengers pass to and fro noiselessly on their way homeward. We are on classic ground—near that old and venerable Museum, the dark monastic pile which the taste of the age had spared then—and the quiet of the temple seems to hallow the precincts. Captain Roland is seated by the fireplace, and, though there is no fire, he is shading his face with a hand-screen; my father and Mr. Trevanion have drawn their chairs close to each other in the middle of the room; Sir Sedley Beaudesert leans against the wall near the window, and behind my mother, who looks prettier and more pleased than usual, since her Austin has his old friends about him; and I, leaning my elbow on the table, and my chin upon my hand, am gazing with great admiration on Sir Sedley Beaudesert.

O rare specimen of a race fast decaying! —specimen of the true fine gentleman, ere the word dandy was known, and before exquisite became a noun substantive—let me here pause to describe thee! Sir Sedley Beaudesert was the contemporary of Trevanion and my father; but, without affecting to be young, he still seemed so. Dress, tone, look, manner—all were young—yet all had a certain dignity which does not belong to youth. At the age of five-and-twenty, he had won what would have been fame to a French marquis of the old *régime*, viz.—the reputation of being "the most charming man of his day"—the most popular of our sex—the most favored, my dear lady-reader, by yours. It is a mistake, I believe, to suppose that it does not require talent to become the fashion; at all events, Sir Sedley was the fashion, and he had talent. He had travelled much, he had read much—especially in memoirs, history, and belles-lettres, — he made verses with grace and a certain originality of easy wit and courtly sentiment—he conversed delightfully—he was polished and urbane in manner—he was brave and honorable in conduct; in words he could flatter —in deeds he was sincere.

Sir Sedley Beaudesert had never married. Whatever his years, he was still young enough in looks to be married for love. He was high-born, he was rich; he was, as I have said, popular; yet on his fair features there was

an expression of melancholy; and on that forehead—pure from the lines of ambition, and free from the weight of study—there was the shadow of unmistakable regret.

"I dont't know that," said my father; "I have never yet found in life one man who made happiness his end and aim. One wants to gain a fortune, another to spend it—one to get a place, another to build a name; but they all know very well that is not happiness they search for. No Utilitarian was ever actuated by self-interest, poor man, when he sat down to scribble his unpopular crotchets to prove self-interest universal. And as to that notable distinction—between self-interest vulgar and self-interest enlightened—the more the self-interest is enlightened, the less we are influenced by it.

"If you tell the young man who has just written a fine book or made a fine speech, that he will not be any happier, if he attain to the fame of Milton or the power of Pitt, and that, for the sake of his own happiness, he had much better cultivate a farm, live in the country, and postpone to the last the days of dyspepsia and gout, he will answer you fairly—'I am quite as sensible of that as your are. But I am not thinking whether or not I shall be happy. I have made up my mind to be, if I can, a great author or a prime minister.' So it is with all the active sons of the world. To push on is the law of nature. And you can no more say to men and to nations than to children,—'Sit still, and don't wear out your shoes!'"

"Then," said Trevanion, "if I tell you I am not happy, your only answer is, that I obey an inevitable law."

"No! I don't say that it is an inevitable law that man should not be happy; but it is an inevitable law that a man, in spite of himself, should live for something higher than his own happiness. He cannot live in himself or for himself, however egotistical he may try to be. Every desire he has links him with others. Man is not a machine—he is a part of one."

"True, brother, he is a soldier, not an army," said Captain Roland.

"Life is a drama, not a monologue," pursued my father. "Drama is derived from a Greek verb, signifying *to do*. Every actor in the drama has something to do, which helps on the progress of the whole: that is the object for which the Author created him. Do your part, and let the Great Play get on."

"Ah!" said Trevanion briskly, "but to do the part is the difficulty! Every actor helps to the catastrophe, and yet must do his part without knowing how all is to end. Shall he help the curtain to fall on a tragedy or a comedy? Come, I will tell you the one secret of my public life—that which explains all its failure (for, in spite of my position, I have failed) and its regrets—*I want conviction!*"

"Exactly," said my father; "because to every question there are two sides, and you look at them both."

"You have said it," answered Trevanion, smiling also. "For public life a man should be one-sided; he must act with a party; and a party insists that the shield is silver, when, if it will take the trouble to turn the corner, it will see that the reverse of the shield is gold. Woe to the man who makes that discovery alone, while his party are still swearing the shield is silver, and that not once in his life, but every night!"

"You have said quite enough to convince me that you ought not to belong to a party, but not enough to convince me why you should not be happy," said my father.

"Do you remember," said Sir Sedley Beaudesert, "an anecdote of the first Duke of Portland? He had a gallery in the great stable of his villa in Holland, where a concert was given once a-week, to *cheer and amuse* his horses! I have no doubt the horses thrived all the better for it. What Trevanion wants is a concert once a week. With him it is always saddle and spur. Yet, after all, who would not envy him? If life be a drama, his name stands high in the playbill, and is printed in capitals on the walls."

"Envy me!" cried Trevanion—"ME!—no, you are the enviable man—you who have only one grief in the world, and that so absurd a one, that I will make you blush by disclosing it. Hear, O sage Austin!—O sturdy Roland!—Olivares was haunted by a spectre, and Sedley Beaudesert by the dread of old age!"

"Well," said my mother seriously, "I do

think it requires a great sense of religion, or, at all events, children of one's own, in whom one is young again, to reconcile one-self to becoming old."

"My dear ma'am," said Sir Sedley, who had slightly colored at Trevanion's charge, but had now recovered his easy self-possession, "you have spoken so admirably that you give me courage to confess my weakness. I do dread to be old. All the joys of my life have been the joys of youth. I have had so exquisite a pleasure in the mere sense of living, that old age, as it comes near, terrifies me by its dull eyes and gray hairs. I have lived the life of the butterfly. Summer is over, and I see my flowers withering; and my wings are chilled by the first airs of winter. Yes, I envy Trevanion; for, in public life, no man is ever young; and, while he can work, he is never old."

"My dear Beaudesert," said my father, "when St. Amable, patron saint of Riom, in Auvergne, went to Rome, the sun waited upon him as a servant, carried his cloak and gloves for him in the heat, and kept off the rain, if the weather changed, like an umbrella. You want to put the sun to the same use; you are quite right; but then, you see, you must first be a saint before you can be sure of the sun as a servant."

Sir Sedley smiled charmingly; but the smile changed to a sigh as he added, "I don't think I should much mind being a saint, if the sun would be my sentinel instead of my courier. I want nothing of him but to stand still. You see he moved even for St. Amable. My dear madam, you and I understand each other; and it is a very hard thing to grow old, do what one will to keep young."

"What say you, Roland, of these two malcontents?" asked my father. The captain turned uneasily in his chair, for the rheumatism was gnawing his shoulder, and sharp pains were shooting through his mutilated limb.

"I say," answered Roland, "that these men are wearied with marching from Brentford to Windsor—that they have never known the bivouac and the battle."

Both the grumblers turned their eyes to the veteran: the eyes rested first on the furrowed, care-worn lines in his eagle face—then they fell on the stiff, outstretched cork limb—and then they turned away.

Meanwhile my mother had softly risen, and under pretence of looking for her work on the table near him, bent over the old soldier and pressed his hand,

"Gentlemen," said my father, "I don't think my brother ever heard of Nichocorus, the Greek comic writer; yet he has illustrated him very ably. Saith Nichocorus, 'the best cure for drunkenness is a sudden calamity.' For chronic drunkenness, a continued course of real misfortune must be very salutary!"

No answer came from the two complainants; and my father took up a great book.

CHAPTER II.

"My friends," said my father, looking up from his book, and addressing himself to his two visitors, "I know of one thing, milder than calamity, that would do you both a great deal of good."

"What is that?" asked Sir Sedley.

"A saffron bag, worn at the pit of the stomach!"

"Austin, my dear!" said my mother, reprovingly.

My father did not heed the interruption, but continued, gravely—"Nothing is better for the spirits! Roland is in no want of saffron, because he is a warrior; and the desire of fighting, and the hope of victory, infuse such a heat into the spirits as is profitable for long life, and keeps up the system."

"Tut!" said Trevanion.

"But gentlemen in your predicament must have recourse to artificial means. Nitre in broth, for instance—about three grains to ten—(cattle fed upon nitre grow fat); or earthy odors—such as exist in cucumbers and cabbage. A certain great lord had a clod of fresh earth, laid in a napkin, put under his nose every morning after sleep. Light anointing of the head with oil, mixed with roses and salt, is not bad; but, upon the whole, I prescribe the saffron bag at the——"

"Sisty, my dear, will you look for my scissors?" said my mother.

"What nonsense are you talking! Question! question!" cried Mr. Trevanion.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed my father, opening his eyes: "I am giving you the advice of Lord Bacon. You want conviction—conviction comes from passion—passion from the spirits—spirits from a saffron bag. You, Beaudesert, on the other hand, want to keep youth. He keeps youth longest who lives longest. Nothing more conduces to longevity than a saffron bag, provided always it is worn at the——"

"Sisty, my thimble!" said my mother.

"You laugh at us justly," said Beaudesert, smiling; "and the same remedy, I dare say, would cure us both!"

"Yes," said my father, "there is no doubt of that. In the pit of the stomach is that great central web of nerves called the ganglions; thence they affect the head and the heart. My Squills proved that to us, Sisty."

"Yes," said I; "but I never heard Mr. Squills talk of a saffron bag."

"Oh, foolish boy! it is not the saffron bag—it is the belief in the saffron bag. Apply BELIEF to the centre of the nerves, and all will go well," said my father.

CHAPTER III.

"BUT it is a devil of a thing to have too nice a conscience!" quoth the member of parliament.

"And it is not an angel of a thing to lose one's front teeth!" sighed the fine gentleman.

Therewith my father rose, and, putting his hand into his waistcoat, *more suo*, delivered his famous

SERMON UPON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND PURPOSE.

Famous it was in our domestic circle. But, as yet, it has not gone beyond. And since the reader, I am sure, does not turn to the Caxton Memoirs with the expectation of finding sermons, so to that circle let its fame be circumscribed. All I shall say about it is, that it was a very fine sermon, and that it proved indisputably, to me at least, the salubrious effects of a saffron bag applied to the great centre of the nervous system. But the wise Ali saith, that "a fool doth not know what maketh him look little, neither will he hearken to him that adviseth him." I cannot assert that my father's friends were fools, but they certainly came under this definition of Folly.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR therewith arose, not conviction, but discussion; Trevanion was logical, Beaudesert sentimental. My father held firm to the saffron bag. When James the First dedicated to the Duke of Buckingham his meditation on the Lord's Prayer, he gave a very sensible reason for selecting his grace for that honor,—"For," saith the king, "it is made upon a very short and plain prayer, and, therefore, the fitter for a courtier, for courtiers are for the most part thought neither to have lust nor leisure to say long prayers; liking best *courte messe et long disner*." I suppose it was for a similar reason that my father persisted in dedicating to the member of parliament and the fine gentleman this "short and plaine" morality of his —to wit, the saffron bag. He was evidently persuaded, if he could once get them to apply that, it was all that was needful; that they had neither lust nor leisure for longer instructions. And this saffron bag, —it came down with such a whack, at every round in the argument! You would have thought my father one of the old plebeian combatants in the popular ordeal, who, forbidden to use sword and lance, fought with a sand-bag tied to a flail: a very stunning weapon it was when filled only with sand; but a bag filled with saffron,—it was irresistible! Though my father had two to one against him, they could not stand such a deuce of a weapon. And after tuts and pishes innumerable from Mr. Trevanion, and sundry bland grimaces from Sir Sedley Beaudesert, they fairly gave in, though they would not own they were beaten.

"Enough," said the member, "I see that you don't comprehend me; I must continue to move by my own impulse."

Myfather's pet book was the Colloquies

of Erasmus; he was wont to say that those Colloquies furnished life with illustrations in every page. Out of the Colloquies of Erasmus he now answered the member:—

"Rabirius, wanting his servant Syrus to get up," quoth my father, "cried out to him to move. 'I do move,' said Syrus. 'I see you move,' replied Rabirius, 'but you *move nothing*.' To return to the saffron bag,——"

"Confound the saffron bag!" cried Trevanion, in a rage; and then softening his look as he drew on his gloves, he turned to my mother, and said, with more politeness than was natural to, or at least customary with him:—

"By the way, my dear Mrs. Caxton, I should tell you that Lady Ellinor comes to town to-morrow, on purpose to call on you. We shall be here some little time, Austin; and though London is so empty, there are still some persons of note to whom I should like to introduce you, and yours——"

"Nay," said my father; "your world and my world are not the same. Books for me, and men for you. Neither Kitty nor I can change our habits, even for friendship; she has a great piece of work to finish, and so have I. Mountains cannot stir, especially when in labor; but Mahomet can come to the mountain as often as he likes."

Mr. Trevanion insisted, and Sir Sedley Beaudesert mildly put in his own claims; both boasted acquaintance with literary men, whom my father would, at all events, be pleased to meet. My father doubted whether he could meet any literary men more eloquent than Cicero, or more amusing than Aristophanes; and observed, that if such did exist, he would rather meet them in their books than in a drawing-room. In fine, he was immovable; and so also, with less argument, was Captain Roland.

Then Mr. Trevanion turned to me.

"Your son, at all events, should see something of the world."

My mother's soft eye sparkled.

"My dear friend, I thank you," said my father, touched; "and Pisistratus and I will talk it over."

Our guests had departed. All four of us gathered to the open window, and enjoyed in silence the cool air and the moonlight.

"Austin," said my mother at last, "I fear it is for my sake that you refuse going amongst your old friends: you knew I should be frightened by such fine people, and"—

"And we have been happy for more than eighteen years without them, Kitty! My poor friends are not happy, and we are. To leave well alone is a golden rule worth all in Pythagoras. The ladies of Bubastis, my dear, a place in Egypt, where the cat was worshipped, always kept rigidly aloof from the gentlemen in Athribis, who adored the shrew-mice. Cats are domestic animals,—your shrew-mice are sad gad-abouts: you can't find a better model, my Kitty, than the ladies of Bubastis."

"How Trevanion is altered!" said Roland, musingly—"he who was so lively and ardent!"

"He ran too fast up-hill at first, and has been out of breath ever since," said my father.

"And Lady Ellinor," said Roland, hesitatingly, "shall you see her to-morrow?"

"Yes!" said my father, calmly.

As Captain Roland spoke, something in the tone of his question seemed to flash a conviction on my mother's heart, — the woman there was quick: she drew back, turning pale, even in the moonlight, and fixed her eyes on my father, while I felt her hand which had clasped mine tremble convulsively.

I understood her. Yes, this Lady Ellinor was the early rival whose name till then she had not known. She fixed her eyes on my father, and at his tranquil tone and quiet look she breathed more freely, and, sliding her hand from mine, rested it fondly on his shoulder. A few moments afterwards, I and Captain Roland found ourselves standing alone by the window.

"You are young, nephew," said the Captain; "and you have the name of a fallen family to raise. Your father does well not to reject for you that opening into the great world which Trevanion offers. As for me, my business in London seems over: I cannot find what I came to seek. I have sent for my daughter; when she arrives I shall return to my old tower; and the man and the ruin will crumble away together."

"Tush, uncle! I must work hard and get money; and then we will repair the old

tower, and buy back the old estate. My father shall sell the red brick house; we will fit him up a library in the keep; and we will all live united, in peace, and in state, as grand as our ancestors before us."

While I thus spoke my uncle's eyes were fixed upon a corner of the street, where a figure, half in shade, half in moonlight, stood motionless, "Ah!" said I, following his eye, "I have observed that man, two or three times, pass up and down the street on the other side of the way, and turn his head towards our window. Our guests were with us then, and my father in full discourse, or I should have"—

Before I could finish the sentence, my uncle, stifling an exclamation, broke away, hurried out of the room, stumped down the stairs, and was in the street, while I was yet rooted to the spot with surprise. I remained at the window, and my eye rested on the figure. I saw the Captain, with his bare head and his gray hair cross the street; the figure started, turned the corner, and fled.

Then I followed my uncle, and arrived in time to save him from falling: he leant his head on my breast, and I heard him murmur, —"It is he—it is he! He has watched us! —he repents!"

CHAPTER V.

THE next day Lady Ellinor called; but, to my great disappointment, without Fanny.

Whether or not some joy at the incident of the previous night had served to rejuvenate my uncle, I know not, but he looked to me ten years younger when Lady Ellinor entered. How carefully the buttoned-up coat was brushed! how new and glossy was the black stock! The poor Captain was restored to his pride, and mighty proud he looked! With a glow on his cheek, and a fire in his eye; his head thrown back, and his whole air composed, severe, Mavortian and majestic, as if awaiting the charge of the French cuirassiers at the head of his detachment.

My father, on the contrary, was as usual (till dinner, when he always dressed punctiliously, out of respect to his Kitty) in his easy morning gown and slippers; and nothing but a certain compression in his lips, which had lasted all the morning, evinced his anticipation of the visit, or the emotion it caused him.

Lady Ellinor behaved beautifully. She could not conceal a certain nervous trepidation, when she first took the hand my father extended; and, in touching rebuke of the Captain's stately bow, she held out to him the hand left disengaged, with a look which brought Roland at once to her side. It was a desertion of his colors to which nothing, short of Ney's shameful conduct at Napoleon's return from Elba, affords a parallel in history. Then, without waiting for introduction, and before a word indeed was said, Lady Ellinor came to my mother so cordially, so caressingly—she threw into her smile, voice, manner, such winning sweetness, that I, intimately learned in my poor mother's simple loving heart, wondered how she refrained from throwing her arms round Lady Ellinor's neck and kissing her outright. It must have been a great conquest over herself not to do it! My turn came next; and talking to me, and about me, soon set all parties at their ease—at least apparently.

What was said I cannot remember; I do not think one of us could. But an hour slipped away, and there was no gap in the conversation.

With curious interest, and a survey I strove to make impartial, I compared Lady Ellinor with my mother. And I comprehended the fascination which the high-born lady must, in their earlier youth, have exercised over both brothers, so dissimilar to each other. For *charm* was the characteristic of Lady Ellinor—a charm indefinable. It was not the mere grace of refined breeding, though that went a great way; it was a charm that seemed to spring from natural sympathy. Whomsoever she addressed, that person appeared for the moment to engage all her attention, to interest her whole mind. She had a gift of conversation very peculiar. She made what she said like a continuation of what was said to her. She seemed as if she had entered into your thoughts, and talked them aloud. Her mind was evidently cultivated with great care, but she was perfectly void of pedantry. A hint, an allu-

sion, sufficed to show how much she knew, to one well instructed, without mortifying or perplexing the ignorant. Yes, there probably was the only woman my father had ever met who could be the companion to his mind, walk through the garden of knowledge by his side, and trim the flowers while he cleared the vistas.

On the other hand, there was an inborn nobility in Lady Ellinor's sentiments that must have struck the most susceptible chord in Roland's nature, and the sentiments took eloquence from the look, the mien, the sweet dignity of the very turn of the head. Yes, she must have been a fitting Oriana to a young Amadis. It was not hard to see that Lady Ellinor was ambitious—that she had a love of fame, for fame itself—that she was proud—that she set value (and that morbidly) on the world's opinion. This was perceptible when she spoke of her husband, even of her daughter. It seemed to me as if she valued the intellect of the one, the beauty of the other, by the gauge of the social distinction it conferred. She took measure of the gift, as I was taught at Dr. Herman's to take measure of the height of a tower—by the length of the shadow it cast upon the ground.

My dear father! with such a wife you would never have lived eighteen years, shivering on the edge of a Great Book.

My dear uncle, with such a wife you would never have been contented with a cork leg and a Waterloo medal! And I understand why Mr. Trevanion, "eager and ardent" as ye say he was in youth, with a heart bent on the practical success of life, won the hand of the heiress. Well, you see Mr. Trevanion has contrived not to be happy! By the side of my listening, admiring mother, with her blue eyes moist, and her coral lips apart, Lady Ellinor looks faded. Was she ever as pretty as my mother is now? Never. But she was much handsomer. What delicacy in the outline, and yet how decided in spite of the delicacy! The eyebrow so defined—the profile slightly aquiline, so clearly cut—with the curved nostril, which, if physiognomists are right, shows sensibility so keen; and the classic lip that, but for the neighboring dimple, would be so haughty. But wear and tear are in that face. The nervous excitable temper has helped the fret and cark of ambitious life. My dear uncle, I know not yet your private life. But as for my father, I am sure that, though he might have done more on earth, he would have been less fit for heaven, if he had married Lady Ellinor.

At last this visit—dreaded, I am sure, by three of the party, was over, but not before I had promised to dine at the Trevanions' that day.

When we were again alone, my father threw off a long breath, and, looking round him cheerfully, said, "Since Pisistratus deserts us, let us console ourselves for his absence—send for brother Jack, and all four go down to Richmond to drink tea."

"Thank you, Austin," said Roland. "But I don't want it, I assure you!"

"Upon your honor?" said my father in a half whisper.

"Upon my honor."

"Nor I either! So, my dear Kitty, Roland and I will take a walk, and be back in time to see if that young Anachronism looks as handsome as his new London-made clothes will allow him. Properly speaking, he ought to go with an apple in his hand, and a dove in his bosom. But now I think of it, that was luckily not the fashion with the Athenians till the time of Alcibiades!"

CHAPTER VI.

You may judge of the effect that my dinner at Mr. Trevanion's, with a long conversation after it with Lady Ellinor, made upon my mind, when, on my return home, after having satisfied all questions of parental curiosity, I said nervously, and looking down,—"My dear father,—I should like very much, if you have no objection,—to—to"—

"What, my dear?" asked my father, kindly.

"Accept an offer Lady Ellinor has made me, on the part of Mr. Trevanion. He wants a secretary. He is kind enough to excuse my inexperience, and declares I shall do very well, and can soon get into his ways. Lady Ellinor says (I continued with dignity)

that it will be a great opening in public life for me; and at all events, my dear father, I shall see much of the world, and learn what I really think will be more useful to me than anything they will teach me at college."

My mother looked anxiously at my father. "It will indeed be a great thing for Sisty," said she, timidly; and then, taking courage, she added—"And that is just the sort of life he is formed for"—

"Hem!" said my uncle.

My father rubbed his spectacles thoughtfully, and replied, after a long pause,—

"You may be right, Kitty: I don't think Pisistratus is meant for study; action will suit him better. But what does this office lead to?"

"Public employment, sir," said I, boldly; "the service of my country."

"If that be the case," quoth Roland, "I have not a word to say. But I should have thought that for a lad of spirit, a descendant of the old De Caxtons, the army would have"—

"The army!" exclaimed my mother, clasping her hands, and looking involuntarily at my uncle's cork leg.

"The army!" repeated my father, peevishly. "Bless my soul, Roland, you seem to think man is made for nothing else but to be shot at! You would not like the army, Pisistratus?"

"Why, sir, not if it pained you and my dear mother; otherwise, indeed"—

"Papæ!" said my father, interrupting me. "This all comes of your giving the boy that ambitious, uncomfortable name, Mrs. Caxton; what could a Pisistratus be but the plague of one's life? That idea of serving his country is Pisistratus ipsissimus all over. If ever I have another son (*Dii meliora!*) he has only got to be called Eratostratus, and then he will be burning down St. Paul's; which I believe was, by the way, first made out of the stones of a temple to Diana! Of the two, certainly, you had better serve your country with a goose-quill than by poking a bayonet into the ribs of some unfortunate Indian;—I don't think there are any other people whom the service of one's country makes it necessary to kill just at present,—eh, Roland?"

"It is a very fine field, India," said my uncle, sententiously. "It is the nursery of captains."

"Is it? Those plants take up a great deal of ground, then, that might be more profitably cultivated. And, indeed, considering that the tallest captains in the world will be ultimately set into a box not above seven feet at the longest, it is astonishing what a quantity of room that species of *arbor mortis* takes in the growing! However, Pisistratus, to return to your request, I will think it over, and talk to Trevanion."

"Or rather to Lady Ellinor," said I, imprudently: my mother slightly shivered, and took her hand from mine. I felt cut to the heart by the slip of my own tongue.

"That, I think, your mother could do best," said my father, drily, "if she wants to be quite convinced that somebody will see that your shirts are aired. For I suppose they mean you to lodge at Trevanion's."

"Oh, no!" cried my mother. "He might as well go to college then. I thought he was to stay with us; only go in the morning, but, of course, sleep here."

"If I know anything of Trevanion," said my father, "his secretary will be expected to do without sleep. Poor boy! you don't know what it is you desire. And yet, at your age, I"—my father stopped short. "No!" he renewed abruptly after a long silence, and as if soliloquizing. "No: man is never wrong while he lives for others. The philosopher who contemplates from the rock is a less noble image than the sailor who struggles with the storm. Why should there be two of us? And *could* he be an *alter ego*, even if I wished it? Impossible!" My father turned on his chair, and laying the left leg on the right knee, said smilingly, as he bent down to look me full in the face; "But, Pisistratus, will you promise me always to wear the saffron bag?"

CHAPTER VII.

I NOW make a long stride in my narrative. I am domesticated with the Trevanions. A very short conversation with the statesman sufficed to decide my father; and the pith of it lay in this single sentence uttered by Tre-

vanion—"I promise you one thing—he shall never be idle!"

Looking back, I am convinced that my father was right, and that he understood my character, and the temptations to which I was most prone, when he consented to let me resign college and enter thus prematurely on the world of men. I was naturally so joyous that I should have made college life a holiday, and then, in repentance, worked myself into a phthisis.

And my father, too, was right, that, though I could study, I was not meant for a student.

After all, the thing was an experiment. I had time to spare; if the experiment failed, a year's delay would not necessarily be a year's loss.

I am ensconced, then, at Mr. Trevanion's. I have been there some months—it is late in the winter; parliament and the season have commenced. I work hard—Heaven knows harder than I should have worked at college. Take a day for sample.

Trevanion gets up at eight o'clock, and in all weathers rides an hour before breakfast; at nine he takes that meal in his wife's dressing-room; at half-past nine he comes into his study. By that time he expects to find done by his secretary the work I am about to describe.

On coming home, or rather before going to bed, which is usually after three o'clock, it is Mr. Trevanion's habit to leave on the table of the said study a list of directions for the secretary. The following, which I take at random from many I have preserved, may show their multifarious nature:—

1. Look out in the Reports (Committee House of Lords) for the last seven years—all that is said about the growth of flax—mark the passages for me.

2. Do. do.—"Irish Emigration."

3. Hunt out second volume of Kames's History of Man, passage containing "Reid's Logic"—don't know where the book is!

4. How does the line beginning "Lumina conjurent, inter" something, end? Is it in Gray? See!

5. Fracastorius writes—"Quantum hoc *infecit* vitium, quot adiverit urbes." Query, ought it not, in strict grammar, to be—*infecerit* instead of *infecit?*—if you don't know, write to father.

6. Write the four letters in full from the notes I leave, *i. e.*, about the Ecclesiastical Courts.

7. Look out Population Returns—strike average of last five years (between mortality and births) in Devonshire and Lancashire.

8. Answer these six begging letters; "No"—civilly.

9. The other six, to constituents—"that I have no interest with Government."

10. See, if you have time, whether any of the new books on the round table are not trash.

11. I want to know ALL about Indian corn?

12. Longinus says something, somewhere, in regret for uncongenial pursuits (public life, I suppose)—what is it? N. B. Longinus is not in my London Catalogue, but is here, I know—I think in a box in the lumber-room.

13. Set right the calculation I leave on the poor-rates. I have made a blunder somewhere. Etc. etc.

Certainly my father knew Mr. Trevanion; he never expected a secretary to sleep! To get through the work required of me by half-past nine, I get up by candle-light. At half-past nine I am still hunting for Longinus, when Mr. Trevanion comes in with a bundle of letters.

Answers to half the said letters fall to my share. Directions verbal—in a species of short-hand talk. While I write, Mr. Trevanion reads the newspapers—examines what I have done—makes notes therefrom, some for Parliament, some for conversation, some for correspondence—skims over the Parliamentary papers of the morning—and jots down directions for extracting, abridging, and comparing them, with others, perhaps twenty years old. At eleven he walks down to a Committee of the House of Commons—leaving me plenty to do—till half-past three, when he returns. At four, Fanny puts her head into the room—and I lose mine. Four days in the week Mr. Trevanion then disappears for the rest of the day—dines at Bellamy's or a club—expects me at the House at eight o'clock, in case he thinks of something, wants a fact or a quotation. He then releases me—generally with a fresh list of instructions. But I have my holidays, nevertheless. On Wednesdays and Saturdays Mr. Trevanion gives dinners, and I meet the most eminent men of the day—on both sides. For Trevanion is on both sides himself—or no side at all, which comes to the same thing.

On Tuesdays, Lady Ellinor gives me a ticket for the Opera, and I get there at least in time for the ballet. I have already invitations enough to balls and soirées, for I am regarded as an only son of great expectations. I am treated as becomes a Caxton who has the right, if he pleases, to put a De before his name. I have grown very smart.

I have taken a passion for dress—natural to eighteen. I like everything I do, and every one about me. I am over head and ears in love with Fanny Trevanion—who breaks my heart, nevertheless; for she flirts with two peers, a life-guardsman, three old members of parliament, Sir Sedley Beaudesert, one ambassador, and all his attachés, and, positively, (the audacious minx !) with a bishop, in full wig and apron, who, people say, means to marry again.

Pisistratus has lost color and flesh. His mother says he is very much improved;—*that* he takes to be the natural effect produced by Stultz and Hoby. Uncle Jack says he is "fined down."

His father looks at him and writes to Trevanion,—

"Dear T.—I refused a salary for my son. Give him a horse, and two hours a-day to ride it. Yours, A. C."

The next day I am master of a pretty bay mare, and riding by the side of Fanny Trevanion. Alas ! alas !

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE not mentioned my Uncle Roland. He is gone—abroad—to fetch his daughter. He has stayed longer than was expected. Does he seek his son still—there as here? My father has finished the first portion of his work, in two great volumes. Uncle Jack, who for some time has been looking melancholy, and who now seldom stirs out, except on Sundays (on which days we all meet at my father's and dine together),—Uncle Jack, I say, has undertaken to sell it.

"Don't be over sanguine," says Uncle Jack, as he locks up the MS. in two red boxes with a slit in the lids, which belonged to one of the defunct companies. "Don't be over sanguine as to the price. These publishers never venture much on a first experiment. They must be talked even into looking at the book."

"Oh !" said my father, "if they will publish it at all, and at their own risk, I should not stand out for any other terms. 'Nothing great,' said Dryden, 'ever came from a venal pen !'"

"An uncommonly foolish observation of Dryden's," returned Uncle Jack: "he ought to have known better."

"So he did," said I, "for he used his pen to fill his pockets—poor man !"

"But the pen was not venal, master Anachronism," said my father. "A baker is not to be called venal if he sells his loaves—he is venal if he sells himself: Dryden only sold his loaves."

"And we must sell yours," said Uncle Jack, emphatically. "A thousand pounds a volume will be about the mark, eh ?"

"A thousand pounds a volume ?" cried my father. "Gibbon, I fancy, did not receive more."

"Very likely; Gibbon had not an Uncle Jack to look after his interests," said Mr. Tibbets, laughing and rubbing those smooth hands of his. "No ! two thousand pounds the two volumes ! a sacrifice, but still I recommend moderation."

"I should be happy, indeed, if the book brought in anything," said my father, evidently fascinated—"for that young gentleman is rather expensive; and you, my dear Jack;—perhaps half the sum may be of use to you !"

"To me ! my dear brother," cried Uncle Jack—"to me ! why, when my new speculation has succeeded, I shall be a millionaire !"

"Have you a new speculation, uncle ?" said I anxiously. "What is it ?"

"Mum !" said my uncle, putting his finger to his lip, and looking all round the room—"Mum ! ! Mum ! !"

PISISTRATUS.—"A Grand National Company for blowing up both Houses of Parliament !"

MR. CAXTON.—"Upon my life, I hope something newer than that; for they, to judge by the newspapers, don't want brother Jack's assistance to blow up each other !"

UNCLE JACK—(mysteriously).—"Newspapers ! you don't often read a newspaper, Austin Caxton !"

MR. CAXTON.—"Granted, John Tibbets !"

UNCLE JACK.—"But if my speculation make you read a newspaper every day ?"

MR. CAXTON (astounded).—"Make me read a newspaper every day !"

UNCLE JACK (warming, and expanding

his hands to the fire).—"As big as the *Times!*"

MR. CAXTON (uneasily).—"Jack, you alarm me!"

UNCLE JACK.—"And make you write in it too—a leader!"

MR. CAXTON, pushing back his chair, seizes the only weapon at his command, and hurls at Uncle Jack a great sentence of Greek—"Τους μεν γαρ ειναι χαλεπους, ὁσε και ανθροποφαγειν!"*

UNCLE JACK (nothing daunted).—"Ay, and put as much Greek as you like into it!"

MR. CAXTON (relieved and softening).—"My dear Jack, you are a great man—let us hear you!"

Then Uncle Jack began. Now, perhaps my readers may have remarked that this illustrious speculator was really fortunate in his ideas. His speculations in themselves always had something sound in the kernel, considering how barren they were in the fruit; and this it was that made him so dangerous. The idea Uncle Jack had now got hold of will, I am convinced, make a man's fortune one of these days; and I relate it with a sigh, in thinking how much has gone out of the family. Know, then, it was nothing less than setting up a daily paper on the plan of the *Times*, but devoted entirely to Art, Literature, and Science—*Mental* Progress, in short; I say on the plan of the *Times*, for it was to imitate the mighty machinery of that diurnal illuminator. It was to be the Literary Salmoneus of the Political Jupiter; and rattle its thunder over the bridge of knowledge. It was to have correspondents in all parts of the globe; everything that related to the chronicle of the mind, from the labor of the missionary in the South Sea Islands, or the research of a traveller in pursuit of that mirage called Timbuctoo, to the last new novel at Paris, or the last great emendation of a Greek particle at a German university, was to find a place in this focus of light. It was to amuse, to instruct, to interest—there was nothing it was not to do. Not a man in the whole reading public, not only of the three kingdoms, not only of the British empire, but under the cope of heaven, that it was not to touch somewhere, in head, in heart, or in pocket. The most crotchety member of the intellectual community might find his own hobby in those stables.

"Think," cried Uncle Jack,—"think of the march of mind—think of the passion for cheap knowledge—think how little quarterly, monthly, weekly journals can keep pace with the main wants of the age. As well have a weekly journal on politics, as a weekly journal on all the matters still more interesting than politics to the mass of the public. My Literary Times once started, people will wonder how they had ever lived without it! Sir, they have not lived without it—they have vegetated—they have lived in holes and caves, like the Troggledikes."

"Troglodytes," said my father, mildly—"from *trogle*, a cave—and *dumi*, to go under. They lived in Eithopia, and had their wives in common."

"As to the last point, I don't say that the public, poor creatures, are as bad as that," said Uncle Jack, candidly; "but no simile holds good in all its points. And the public are no less Troggledummies, or whatever you call them, compared with what they will be when living under the full light of my Literary Times. Sir, it will be a revolution in the world. It will bring literature out of the clouds into the parlor, the cottage, the kitchen. The idlest dandy, the finest fine lady, will find something to her taste; the busiest man of the mart and counter will find some acquisition to his practical knowledge. The practical man will see the progress of divinity, medicine, nay, even law. Sir, the Indian will read me under the banyan; I shall be in the seraglios of the East; and over my sheets the American Indian will smoke the calumet of peace. We shall reduce politics to its proper level in the affairs of life—raise literature to its due place in the thoughts and business of men. It is a grand thought; and my heart swells with pride while I contemplate it!"

"My dear Jack," said my father, seriously, and rising with emotion, "it *is* a grand thought, and I honor you for it. You are quite right—it would be a revolution! It

* "Some were so barbarous as to eat their own species." The sentence refers to the Scythians, and is in Strabo. I mention the authority, for Strabo is not an author that any man engaged on a less work than the History of Human Error is expected to have by heart.

would educate mankind insensibly. Upon my life, I should be proud to write a leader, or a paragraph. Jack, you will immortalize yourself!"

"I believe I shall," said Uncle Jack, modestly; "but I have not said a word yet on the greatest attraction of all"—

"Ah! and that"—

"THE ADVERTISEMENTS!" cried my uncle, spreading his hands with all the fingers at angles, like the threads of a spider's web. "The advertisements—oh, think of them!—a perfect *El Dorado*. The advertisements, sir, on the most moderate calculation, will bring us in £50,000 a-year. My dear Pisistratus, I shall never marry; you are my heir. Embrace me!"

So saying, my Uncle Jack threw himself upon me, and squeezed out of breath the prudential demur that was rising to my lips.

My poor mother, between laughing and sobbing, faltered out—"And it is *my* brother who will pay back to *his* son all—all he gave up for me!"

While my father walked to and fro the room, more excited than ever I saw him before, muttering, "A sad useless dog I have been hitherto! I should like to serve the world! I should indeed!"

Uncle Jack had fairly done it this time. He had found out the only bait in the world to catch so shy a carp as my father—"*hæret lethalis arundo*." I saw that the deadly hook was within an inch of my father's nose, and that he was gazing at it with a fixed determination to swallow.

But if it amused my father? Boy that I was, I saw no further. I must own I myself was dazzled, and, perhaps, with childlike malice, delighted at the perturbation of my betters. The young carp was pleased to see the waters so playfully in movement, when the old carp waved his tail, and swayed himself on his fins.

"Mum!" said Uncle Jack, releasing me: "not a word to Mr. Trevanion, to any one."

"But why?"

"Why? God bless my soul. Why? If my scheme gets wind, do you suppose some one will not clap on sail to be before me? You frighten me out of my senses. Promise me faithfully to be silent as the grave—"

"I should like to hear Trevanion's opinion too"—

"As well hear the town crier! Sir, I have trusted to your honor. Sir, at the domestic hearth all secrets are sacred. Sir, I—"

"My dear Uncle Jack, you have said quite enough. Not a word will I breathe!"

"I'm sure you may trust him, Jack," said my mother.

"And I do trust him—with wealth untold," replied my uncle. "May I ask you for a little water—with a trifle of brandy in it—and a biscuit, or indeed a sandwich. This talking makes me quite hungry."

My eye fell upon Uncle Jack as he spoke. Poor Uncle Jack, he had grown thin!

PART SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

SAITH Dr. Luther, "When I saw Dr. Gode begin to tell his puddings hanging in the chimney, I told him he would not live long!"

I wish I had copied that passage from "The Table Talk" in large round hand, and set it before my father at breakfast, the morn preceding that fatal eve in which Uncle Jack persuaded him to tell his puddings.

Yet, now I think of it, Uncle Jack hung the puddings in the chimney,—but he did not persuade my father to tell them.

Beyond a vague surmise that half the suspended "tomacula" would furnish a breakfast to Uncle Jack, and that the youthful appetite of Pisistratus would despatch the rest, my father did not give a thought to the nutritious properties of the puddings,—in other words, to the two thousand pounds which, thanks to Mr. Tibbets, dangled down the chimney. So far as the Great Work was concerned, my father only cared for its publication, not its profits. I will not say that he might not hunger for praise, but I am quite sure that he did not care a button for pudding. Nevertheless, it was an infaust and sinister augury for Austin Caxton, the very appearance, the very suspension and danglement of any puddings whatsoever, right over his ingle-nook, when those puddings were made by the sleek hands of Uncle Jack!

None of the puddings which he, poor man, had all his life been stringing, whether from his own chimneys, or the chimneys of other people, had turned out to be real puddings,—they had always been the *eidola*, the *erscheinungen*, the phantoms and semblances of puddings. I question if Uncle Jack knew much about Democritus of Abdera. But he was certainly tainted with the philosophy of that fanciful sage. He peopled the air with images of colossal stature, which impressed all his dreams and divinations, and from whose influences came his very sensations and thoughts. His whole being, asleep or waking, was thus but the reflection of great phantom puddings!

As soon as Mr. Tibbets had possessed himself of the two volumes of the "History of Human Error," he had necessarily established that hold upon my father which hitherto those lubricate hands of his had failed to effect. He had found what he had so long sighed for in vain, his *point d'appui*, wherein to fix the Archimedian screw. He fixed it tight in the "History of Human Error," and moved the Caxtonian world.

A day or two after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, I saw Uncle Jack coming out of the mahogany doors of my father's banker; and, from that time, there seemed no reason why Mr. Tibbets should not visit his relations on week days as well as Sundays. Not a day, indeed, passed but what he held long conversations with my father. He had much to report of his interviews with the publishers. In these conversations he naturally recurred to that grand idea of the "Literary Times," which had so dazzled my poor father's imagination; and, having heated the iron, Uncle Jack was too knowing a man not to strike while it was hot.

When I think of the simplicity my wise father exhibited in this crisis of his life, I must own that I am less moved by pity than admiration for that poor great-hearted stu-

dent. We have seen that out of the learned indolence of twenty years, the ambition which is the instinct of a man of genius had emerged; the serious preparation of the great book for the perusal of the world, had insensibly restored the claims of that noisy world on the silent individual. And therewith came a noble remorse that he had hitherto done so little for his species. Was it enough to write quartos upon the past history of Human Error? Was it not his duty, when the occasion was fairly presented, to enter upon that present, daily, hourly war with Error—which is the sworn chivalry of Knowledge! St. George did not dissect dead dragons, he fought the live one. And London, with that magnetic atmosphere which in great capitals fills the breath of life with stimulating particles, had its share in quickening the slow pulse of the student. In the country, he read but his old authors, and lived with them through the gone ages. In the city, my father, during the intervals of repose from the Great Book, and still more now that the Great Book had come to a pause,—inspected the literature of his own time.

It had a prodigious effect upon him. He was unlike the ordinary run of scholars, and, indeed, of readers for that matter—who, in their superstitious homage to the dead, are always willing enough to sacrifice the living. He did justice to the marvellous fertility of intellect which characterizes the authorship of the present age. By the present age, I do not only mean the present day, I commence with the century. "What," said my father one day in dispute with Trevanion—"what characterizes the literature of our time is —its *human interest*. It is true that we do not see scholars addressing scholars, but men addressing men,—not that scholars are fewer, but that the reading public is more large. Authors in all ages address themselves to what interests their readers; the same things do not interest a vast community which interested half a score of monks or book-worms. The literary *polis* was once an oligarchy, it is now a republic. It is the general brilliancy of the atmosphere which prevents your noticing the size of any particular star. Do you not see that with the cultivation of the masses has awakened the Literature of the affections? Every sentiment finds an expositor, every feeling an oracle. Like Epimenides, I have been sleeping in a cave; and, waking, I see those whom I left children are bearded men; and towns have sprung up in the landscapes which I left as solitary wastes."

Thence, the reader may perceive the causes of the change which had come over my father. As Robert Hall says, I think of Dr. Kippis, "he had laid so many books at the top of his head, that the brains could not move." But the electricity had now penetrated the heart, and the quickened vigor of that noble organ enabled the brain to stir. Meanwhile, I leave my father to these influences, and to the continuous conversations of Uncle Jack, and proceed with the thread of my own egotism.

Thanks to Mr. Trevanion, my habits were not those which favor friendships with the idle, but I formed some acquaintances amongst young men a few years older than myself, who held subordinate situations in the public offices, or were keeping their terms for the bar. There was no want of ability amongst these gentlemen; but they had not yet settled into the stern prose of life. Their busy hours only made them more disposed to enjoy the hours of relaxation. And when we got together, a very gay, light-hearted set we were! We had neither money enough to be very extravagant nor leisure enough to be very dissipated; but we amused ourselves notwithstanding.

My new friends were wonderfully erudite in all matters connected with the theatres. From an opera to a ballet, from Hamlet to the last farce from the French, they had the literature of the stage at the finger-ends of their straw-colored gloves. They had a pretty large acquaintance with actors and actresses, and were perfect *Walpoluli* in the minor scandals of the day. To do them justice, however, they were not indifferent to the more masculine knowledge necessary in "this wrong world." They talked as familiarly of the real actors of life as of the sham ones. They could adjust to a hair the rival pretensions of contending statesmen. They did not profess to be deep in the mysteries of foreign cabinets (with the exception of one young gentleman connected with the Foreign Office, who prided himself on know-

ing exactly what the Russians meant to do with India—when they got it!); but, to make amends, the majority of them had penetrated the closest secrets of our own. It is true that, according to proper subdivision of labor, each took some particular member of the government for his special observation; just as the most skilful surgeons, however profoundly versed in the general structure of our frame, rest their anatomical fame on the light they throw on particular parts of it,—one man taking the brain, another the duodenum, a third the spinal cord, while a fourth, perhaps, is a master of all the symptoms indicated by a pensile finger.

Accordingly, one of my friends appropriated to himself the Home Department; another the Colonies; and a third, whom we all regarded as a future Talleyrand (or a De Retz at least), had devoted himself to the special study of Sir Robert Peel, and knew, by the way in which that profound and inscrutable statesman threw open his coat, every thought that was passing in his breast! Whether lawyers or officials, they all had a great idea of themselves—high notions of what they were to *be*, rather than what they were to *do*, some day. As the king of modern fine gentlemen said of himself, in paraphrase of Voltaire, "they had letters in their pockets addressed to Posterity,—which the chances were, however, that they might forget to deliver." Somewhat "priggish" most of them might be; but, on the whole, they were far more interesting than mere idle men of pleasure. There was about them, as features of a general family likeness, a redundant activity of life—a gay exuberance of ambition—a light-hearted earnestness when at work—a schoolboy's enjoyment of the hours of play.

A great contrast to these young men was Sir Sedley Beaudesert, who was pointedly kind to me, and whose bachelor's house was always open to me after noon; Sir Sedly was visible to no one, but his valet, before that hour. A perfect bachelor's house it was, too—with its windows opening on the Park, and sofas niched into the windows, on which you might loll at your ease, like the philosopher in Lucretius,—

"Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre,
Errare,"—

and see the gay crowds ride to and fro Rotten Row—without the fatigue of joining them, especially if the wind was in the east.

There was no affectation of costliness about the rooms, but a wonderful accumulation of comfort. Every patent chair that proffered a variety in the art of lounging found its place there; and near every chair a little table, on which you might deposit your book or your coffee-cup, without the trouble of moving more than your hand. In winter, nothing warmer than the quilted curtains and Axminster carpets can be conceived. In summer, nothing airier and cooler than the muslin draperies and the Indian mattings. And I defy a man to know to what perfection dinner may be brought, unless he had dined with Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Certainly, if that distinguished personage had but been an egotist, he had been the happiest of men. But, unfortunately for him, he was singularly amiable and kind-hearted. He had the *bonne digestion*, but not the other requisite for worldly felicity—the *mauvais cœur*. He felt a sincere pity for every one else who lived in rooms without patent chairs and little coffee tables—whose windows did not look on the Park, with sofas niched into their recesses. As Henry IV. wished every man to have his *pot au feu*, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert, if he could have had his way, would have every man served with an early cucumber for his fish, and a caraffe of iced water by the side of his bread and cheese. He thus evinced on politics a naïve simplicity, which delightfully contrasted his acuteness on matters of taste. I remember his saying, in a discussion on the Beer Bill, "The poor ought not to be allowed to drink beer, it is so particularly rheumatic! The best drink in hard work is dry champagne—(not *mousseux*)—I found that out when I used to shoot on the moors."

Indolent as Sir Sedley was, he had contrived to open an extraordinary number of drains on his wealth.

First, as a landed proprietor, there was no end to applications from distressed farmers, aged poor, benefit societies, and poachers he had thrown out of employment by giving up his preserves to please his tenants.

Next, as a man of pleasure, the whole race of womankind had legitimate demands on

him. From a distressed duchess, whose picture lay *perdu* under a secret spring of his snuff-box, to a decayed laundress, to whom he might have paid a compliment on the perfect involutions of a frill, it was quite sufficient to be a daughter of Eve to establish a just claim on Sir Sedley's inheritence from Adam.

Again, as an amateur of art, and a respectful servant of every muse, all whom the public had failed to patronize—painter, actor, poet, musician—turned, like dying sunflowers to the sun, towards the pitying smile of Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Add to these the general miscellaneous multitude, who "had heard of Sir Sedley's high character for benevolence," and one may well suppose what a very costly reputation he had set up. In fact, though Sir Sedley could not spend on what might fairly be called "himself," a fifth part of his very handsome income, I have no doubt that he found it difficult to make both ends meet at the close of the year. That he did so, he owed perhaps to two rules which his philosophy had peremptorily adopted. He never made debts, and he never gambled. For both these admirable aberrations from the ordinary routine of fine gentlemen, I believe he was indebted to the softness of his disposition. He had a great compassion for a wretch who was dunned. "Poor fellow!" he would say, "it must be so painful to him to pass his life in saying No." So little did he know about that class of promisers,—as if a man dunned ever said No. As Beau Brummell, when asked if he was fond of vegetables, owned that he had once eat a pea, so Sir Sedley Beaudesert owned that he had once played high at piquet. "I was so unlucky as to win," said he, referring to that indiscretion, "and I shall never forget the anguish on the face of the man who paid me. Unless I could always lose, it would be a perfect purgatory to play."

Now nothing could be more different in their kinds of benevolence that Sir Sedley and Mr. Trevanion. Mr. Trevanion had a great contempt for individual charity. He rarely put his hand into his purse—he drew a great check on his bankers. Was a congregation without a church, or a village without a school, or a river without a bridge, Mr. Trevanion set to work on calculations, found out the exact sum required by an algebraic *x*—*y*, and paid it as he would have paid his butcher. It must be owned that the distress of a man, whom he allowed to be deserving, did not appeal to him in vain. But it is astonishing how little he spent in that way. For it was hard, indeed, to convince Mr. Trevanion that a deserving man ever was in such distress as to want charity.

That Trevanion, nevertheless, did infinitely more real good than Sir Sedley, I believe; but he did it as a mental operation—by no means as an impulse from the heart. I am sorry to say that the main difference was this,—distress always seemed to accumulate round Sir Sedley, and vanish from the presence of Trevanion. Where the last came, with his busy, active, searching mind, energy woke, improvement sprang up. Where the first came, with his warm kind heart, a kind of torpor spread under its rays; people lay down and basked in the liberal sunshine. Nature in one broke forth like a brisk sturdy winter, in the other like a lazy Italian summer. Winter is an excellent invigorator, no doubt, but we all love summer better.

Now, it is a proof how lovable Sir Sedley was, that I loved him, and yet was jealous of him. Of all the satelites round my fair Cynthia, Fanny Trevanion, I dreaded most this amiable luminary. It was in vain for me to say with the insolence of youth that Sir Sedley Beaudesert was of the same age as Fanny's father;—to see them together, he might have passed for Trevanion's son. No one amongst the younger generation was half so handsome as Sedley Beaudesert. He might be eclipsed at first sight by the showy effect of more redundant locks and more brilliant bloom. But he had but to speak, to smile, in order to throw a whole cohort of dandies into the shade. It was the expression of his countenance that was so bewitching; there was something so kindly in its easy candor, its benign good-nature. And he understood women so well! He flattered their foibles so insensibly; he commanded their affection with so gracious a dignity. Above all, what with his accomplishments, his peculiar reputation, his long celibacy, and the soft melancholy of his sentiments, he always contrived to *interest* them. There was not a charming woman by whom this charming man did not seem

just on the point of being caught! It was like the sight of a splendid trout in a transparent stream, sailing pensively to and fro your fly, in a will and a wont sort of way. Such a trout! it would be a thousand pities to leave him, when evidently so well disposed! That trout, fair maid, or gentle widow, would have kept you—whipping the stream and dragging the fly—from morning to dewy eve. Certainly I don't wish worse to my bitterest foe of five-and-twenty than such a rival as Sedley Beaudesert at seven-and-forty.

Fanny, indeed, perplexed me horribly. Sometimes I fancied she liked me; but the fancy scarce thrilled me with delight before it vanished in the frost of a careless look, or the cold beam of a sarcastic laugh. Spoiled darling of the world as she was, she seemed so innocent in her exuberant happiness, that one forgot all her faults in that atmosphere of joy which she diffused around her. And, despite her pretty insolence, she had so kind a woman's heart below the surface! When she once saw that she had pained you, she was so soft, so winning, so humble, till she had healed the wound. But *then*, if she saw she had pleased you too much, the little witch was never easy till she had plagued you again. As heiress to so rich a father, or rather perhaps mother (for the fortune came from Lady Ellinor), she was naturally surrounded with admirers not wholly disinterested. She did right to plague *them*—but ME! Poor boy that I was, why should I seem more disinterested than others! how should she perceive all that lay hid in my young deep heart? Was I not in all worldly pretensions the least worthy of her admirers, and might I not seem, therefore, the most mercenary? I who never thought of her fortune, or if that thought did come across me, it was to make me start and turn pale! And then it vanished at her first glance, as a ghost from the dawn. How hard it is to convince youth, that sees all the world of the future before it, and covers that future with golden palaces, of the inequalities of life! In my fantastic and sublime romance, I looked out into that Great Beyond, saw myself orator, statesman, minister, ambassador—Heaven knows what—laying laurels, which I mistook for rent-rolls, at Fanny's feet.

Whatever Fanny might have discovered as to the state of my heart, it seemed an abyss not worth prying into by either Trevanion or Lady Ellinor. The first, indeed, as may be supposed, was too busy to think of such trifles. And Lady Ellinor treated me as a mere boy—almost like a boy of her own, she was so kind to me. But she did not notice much the things that lay immediately around her. In brilliant conversation with poets, wits, and statesmen—in sympathy with the toils of her husband—or proud schemes for his aggrandisement, Lady Ellinor lived a life of excitement. Those large eager shining eyes of hers, bright with some feverish discontent, looked far abroad as if for new worlds to conquer—the world at her feet escaped from her vision. She loved her daughter, she was proud of her, trusted in her with a superb repose—she did not watch over her. Lady Ellinor stood alone on a mountain, and amidst a cloud.

CHAPTER II.

ONE day the Trevanions had all gone into the country, on a visit to a retired minister, distantly related to Lady Ellinor, and who was one of the few persons Trevanion himself condescended to consult. I had almost a holiday. I went to call on Sir Sedley Beaudesert. I had always longed to sound him on one subject, and had never dared. This time I resolved to pluck up courage.

"Ah, my young friend!" said he, rising from the contemplation of a villanous picture by a young artist, which he had just benevolently purchased, "I was thinking of you this morning.—Wait a moment, Summers (this to the valet). Be so good as to take this picture, let it be packed up and go down into the country. It is a sort of picture," he added, turning to me, "that requires a large house. I have an old gallery with little casements that let in no light. It is astonishing how convenient I have found it!" As soon as the picture was gone, Sir Sedley drew a long breath, as if relieved; and resumed more gaily—

"Yes, I was thinking of you; and if you will forgive any interference in your affairs—from your father's old friend—I should

be greatly honored by your permission to ask Trevanion what he supposes is to be the ultimate benefit of the horrible labors he inflicts upon you"—

"But, my dear Sir Sedley, I like the labors; I am perfectly contented"—

"Not to remain always secretary to one who, if there were no business to be done among men, would set about teaching the ants to build hills upon better architectural principles! My dear sir, Trevanion is an awful man, a stupendous man—one *catches fatigue* if one is in the same room with him three minutes! At your age, an age that ought to be so happy," continued Sir Sedley, with a compassion perfectly angelic, "it is sad to see so little enjoyment!"

"But, Sir Sedley, I assure you that you are mistaken. I thoroughly enjoy myself; and have I not heard even you confess that one may be idle and not happy?"

"I did not confess that till I was on the wrong side of forty!" said Sir Sedley, with a slight shade on his brow.

"Nobody would ever think you were on the wrong side of forty!" said I, with artful flattery, winding into my subject. "Miss Trevanion for instance?"—

I paused. Sir Sedley looked hard at me, from his bright dark-blue eyes. "Well, Miss Trevanion for instance?"—

"Miss Trevanion, who has all the best-looking fellows in London round her, evidently prefers you to any of them."

I said this with a great gulp. I was obstinately bent on plumbing the depth of my own fears.

Sir Sedly rose; he laid his hand kindly on mine, and said, "Do not let Fanny Trevanion torment you even more than her father does!——"

"I don't understand you, Sir Sedley!"

"But if I understand you, that is more to the purpose. A girl like Miss Trevanion is cruel till she discovers she has a heart. It is not safe to risk one's own with any woman till she has ceased to be a coquette. My dear young friend, if you took life less in earnest, I should spare you the pain of these hints. Some men sow flowers, some plant trees—you are planting a tree under which you will soon find that no flower will grow. Well and good, if the tree could last to bear fruit and give shade; but beware lest you have to tear it up one day or other; for then—what then? why you will find your whole life plucked away with its roots!"

Sir Sedley said these last words with so serious an emphasis, that I was startled from the confusion I had felt at the former part of his address. He paused long, tapped his snuff-box, inhaled a pinch slowly, and continued, with his more accustomed sprightliness.

"Go as much as you can into the world—again I say 'enjoy yourself.' And again I ask, what is all this labor to do for you? On some men, far less eminent than Trevanion, it would impose a duty to aid you in a practical career, to secure you a public employment—not so on him. He would not mortgage an inch of his independence by asking a favor from a minister. He so thinks occupation the delight of life, that he occupies you out of pure affection. He does not trouble his head about your future. He supposes your father will provide for *that*, and does not consider that meanwhile your work leads to nothing! Think over all this. I have now bored you enough."

I was bewildered—I was dumb: these practical men of the world, how they take us by surprise! Here had I come to *sound* Sir Sedley, and here was I plumbed, gauged, measured, turned inside out, without having got an inch beyond the surface of that smiling, *débonnair*, unruffled ease. Yet with his invariable delicacy, in spite of all this horrible frankness, Sir Sedley had not said a word to wound what he might think the more sensitive part of my *amour propre*—not a word as to the inadequacy of my pretensions to think seriously of Fanny Trevanion. Had we been the Celadon and Chloë of a country village, he could not have regarded us as more equal, so far as the world went. And for the rest, he rather insinuated that poor Fanny, the great heiress, was not worthy of me, than that I was not worthy of Fanny.

I felt that there was no wisdom in stammering and blushing out denials and equivocations; so I stretched my hand to Sir Sedley, took up my hat,—and went. Instinctively I bent my way to my father's house. I had not been there for many days. Not

only had I had a great deal to do in the way of business, but I am ashamed to say that pleasure itself had so entangled my leisure hours, and Miss Trevanion especially so absorbed them, that, without even uneasy foreboding, I had left my father fluttering his wings more feebly and feebly in the web of Uncle Jack. When I arrived in Russell Street, I found the fly and the spider cheek-by-jowl together. Uncle Jack sprang up at my entrance, and cried, "Congratulate your father. Congratulate *him!*—no; congratulate the world!"

"What, uncle!" said I, with a dismal effort at sympathizing liveliness, "is the 'Literary Times' launched at last?"

"Oh, that is all settled—settled long since. Here's a specimen of the type we have chosen for the leaders." And Uncle Jack, whose pocket was never without a wet sheet of some kind or other, drew forth a steaming papyral monster, which in point of size was to the political "Times" as a mammoth may be to an elephant. "That is all settled. We are only preparing our contributors, and shall put out our programme next week or the week after. No, Pisistratus, I mean the Great Work."

"My dear father, I am so glad. What! it is really sold, then?"

"Hum!" said my father.

"Sold!" burst forth Uncle Jack. "Sold—no, sir, we would not sell it! No: if all the booksellers fell down on their knees to us, as they will some day, that book should not be sold! Sir, that book is a revolution—it is an era—it is the emancipator of genius from mercenary thraldom;—THAT BOOK!"——

I looked inquiringly from uncle to father, and mentally retracted my congratulations. Then Mr. Caxton, slightly blushing, and shyly rubbing his spectacles, said, "You see, Pisistratus, that though poor Jack has devoted uncommon pains to induce the publishers to recognize the merit he has discovered in the 'History of Human Error,' he has failed to do so."

"Not a bit of it: they all acknowledge its miraculous learning—its—"

"Very true; but they don't think it will sell, and therefore most selfishly refuse to buy it. One bookseller, indeed, offered to treat for it if I would leave out all about the Hottentots and Caffres, the Greek philosophers and Egyptian priests, and confining myself solely to polite society, entitle the work 'Ancedotes of the Courts of Europe, ancient and modern.'"

"The wretch!" groaned Uncle Jack.

"Another thought it might be cut up into little essays, leaving out the quotations, entitled 'Men and Manners.' A third was kind enough to observe, that though this particular work was quite unsaleable, yet, as I appeared to have some historical information, he should be happy to undertake a historical romance from 'my graphic pen'—that was the phrase, was it not, Jack?"

Jack was too full to speak.

—"Provided I would introduce a proper love-plot, and make it into three volumes post octavo, twenty-three lines in a page, neither more nor less. One honest fellow at last was found, who seemed to me a very respectable and indeed enterprising person. And after going through a list of calculations, which showed that no possible profit could arise, he generously offered to give me half of those no-profits, provided I would guarantee half the very visible expenses. I was just meditating the prudence of accepting this proposal, when your uncle was seized with a sublime idea, which has whisked up my book in a whirlwind of expectation."

"And that idea?" said I, despondently.

"That idea," quoth Uncle Jack, recovering himself, "is simply and shortly this. From time immemorial, authors have been the prey of the publishers. Sir, authors have lived in garrets, nay, have been choked in the street by an unexpected crumb of bread, like the man who wrote the play, poor fellow!"

"Otway," said my father. "The story is not true—no matter."

"Milton, sir, as everybody knows, sold Paradise Lost for ten pounds—ten pounds, sir! In short, instances of a like nature are too numerous to quote. But the booksellers, sir—they are leviathans—they roll in seas of gold. They subsist upon authors as vampires upon little children. But at last endurance has reached its limit—the fiat has gone forth—the tocsin of liberty has resounded—authors have burst their fetters. And we have just inaugurated the institution of 'THE

Grand Anti-Publisher Confederate Authors' Society,' by which, Pisistratus—by which, mark you, every author is to be his own publisher; that is, every author who joins the Society. No more submission of immortal works to mercenary calculators, to sordid tastes—no more hard bargains and broken hearts!—no more crumbs of bread choking great tragic poets in the streets—no more Paradises Lost sold at £10 a-piece! The author brings his book to a select committee appointed for the purpose; men of delicacy, education, and refinement—authors themselves; they read it, the Society publish; and after a modest deduction, which goes toward the funds of the Society, the Treasurer hands over the profits to the author."

"So that in fact, Uncle, every author who can't find a publisher anywhere else, will of course come to the Society. The fraternity will be numerous."

"It will indeed."

"And the speculation—ruinous."

"Ruinous, why?"

"Because, in all mercantile negotiations, it is ruinous to invest capital in supplies which fail of demand. You undertake to publish books that booksellers will not publish—why? because booksellers can't sell them! It is just probable that you'll not sell them any better than the booksellers. Ergo, the more your business the larger your deficit. And the more numerous your society, the more disastrous your condition. Q.E.D."

"Pooh! The select committee will decide what books are to be published."

"Then, where the deuce is the advantage to the authors! I would as lief submit my work to a publisher as I would to a select committee of authors. At all events, the publisher is not my rival; and I suspect he is the best judge, after all, of a book—as an accoucheur ought to be of a baby."

"Upon my word, nephew, you pay a bad compliment to your father's Great Work, which the booksellers will have nothing to do with."

That was artfully said, and I was posed; when Mr. Caxton observed, with an apologetic smile—

"The fact is, my dear Pisistratus, that I want my book published without diminishing the little fortune I keep for you some day. Uncle Jack starts a society so to publish it.—Health and long life to Uncle Jack's society! One can't look a gift horse in the mouth."

Here my mother entered, rosy from a shopping expedition with Mrs. Primmins; and in her joy at hearing that I could stay dinner, all else was forgotten. By a wonder, which I did not regret, Uncle Jack really was engaged to dine out. He had other irons in the fire besides the "Literary Times" and the "Confederate Authors' Society;" he was deep in a scheme for making house-tops of felt, (which, under other hands has, I believe, since succeeded;) and he had found a rich man (I suppose a hatter) who seemed well inclined to the project, and had actually asked him to dine and expound his views.

CHAPTER III.

Here we three are seated round the open window—after dinner—familiar as in the old happy time—and my mother is talking low that she may not disturb my father, who seems in thought.——

Cr-cr-crrr-cr-cr! I feel it—I have it.—Where! What! Where! Knock it down—brush it off! For Heaven's sake, see to it!—Crrrr-crrrrr—there—here—in my hair—in my sleeve—in my ear.—Cr-cr.

I say solemnly, and on the word of a Christian, that, as I sat down to begin this chapter, being somewhat in a brown study, the pen insensibly slipt from my hand, and, leaning back in my chair, I fell to gazing into the fire. It is the end of June, and a remarkably cold evening—even for that time of year. And while I was so gazing, I felt something crawling, just by the nape of the neck, ma'am. Instinctively and mechanically, and still musing, I put my hand there, and drew forth—What? That *what* it is which perplexes me. It was a thing—a dark thing—a much bigger thing than I had expected. And the sight took me so by surprise, that I gave my hand a violent shake, and the thing went—where I know not. The what and the where are the knotty points in the whole question! No sooner had it gone

than I was seized with repentance not to have examined it more closely—not to have ascertained what the creature was. It might have been an earwig—a very large motherly earwig—an earwig far gone in that way in which earwigs wish to be who love their lords. I have a profound horror of earwigs—I firmly believe that they do get into the ear. That is a subject on which it is useless to argue with me upon philosophical grounds. I have a vivid recollection of a story told me by Mrs. Primmins—How a lady for many years suffered under the most excruciating headaches; how, as the tombstones say, "physicians were in vain;" how she died; and how her head was opened, and how such a nest of earwigs—ma'am—such a nest!—Earwigs are the prolifickest things, and so fond of their offspring! They sit on their eggs like hens—and the young, as soon as they are born, creep under them for protection—quite touchingly! Imagine such an establishment domesticated at one's tympanum!

But the creature was certainly larger than an earwig. It might have been one of that genus in the family of *Forficulidæ*, called *Labidoura*—monsters whose antennæ have thirty joints! There is a species of this creature in England, but to the great grief of naturalists, and to the great honor of Providence, very rarely found, infinitely larger than the common earwig or *Forficulida auriculana*. Could it have been an early hornet? It had certainly a black head, and great feelers. I have a greater horror of hornets, if possible, than I have of earwigs. Two hornets will kill a man, and three a carriage-horse sixteen hands high. However, the creature was gone.—Yes, but where? Where had I so rashly thrown it? It might have got into a fold of my dressing-gown or into my slippers—or, in short, anywhere, in the various recesses for earwigs and hornets which a gentleman's habiliments afford. I satisfy myself at last, as far as I can, seeing that I am not alone in the room—that it is not upon me. I look upon the carpet—the rug—the chair—under the fender. It is *non inventus*. I barbarously hope it is frizzing behind that great black coal in the grate. I pluck up courage—I prudently remove to the other end of the room. I take up my pen—I begin my chapter—very nicely, too, I think upon the whole. I am just getting into my subject, when—cr-cr-cr-cr-cr—crawl—crawl—crawl—creep—creep—creep. Exactly, my dear ma'am, in the same place it was before! Oh, by the Powers! I forgot all my scientific regrets at not having scrutinized its genus before, whether *Forficulida* or *Labidoura*. I made a desperate lunge with both hands—something between thrust and cut, ma'am. The beast is gone. Yes, but again where? I say that that *where* is a very horrible question. Having come twice, in spite of all my precautions—and exactly on the same spot, too—it shows a confirmed disposition to habituate itself to its quarters—to effect a parochial settlement upon me; there is something awful and preternatural in it. I assure you that there is not a part of me that has not gone cr-cr-cr!—that has not crept, crawled, and forficulated ever since; and I put it to you what sort of a chapter I can make after such a——My good little girl, will you just take the candle, and look carefully under the table?—that's a dear! Yes, my love, very black indeed, with two horns, and inclined to be corpulent. Gentlemen and ladies who have cultivated an acquaintance with the Phœnician language, are aware that Belzebub, examined etymologically and entomologically, is nothing more nor less than Baalzebub—"the Jupiter-fly"—an emblem of the Destroying Attribute, which attribute, indeed, is found in all the insect tribes more or less. Wherefore, as Mr. Payne Knight, in his *Inquiry into Symbolical Languages*, hath observed, the Egyptian priests shaved their whole bodies, even to their eyebrows, lest unaware they should harbor any of the minor Zebubs of the great Baal. If I were the least bit more persuaded that that black cr-cr were about me still, and that the sacrifice of my eyebrows would deprive him of shelter, by the souls of the Ptolemies! I would,—and I will too. Ring the bell, my little dear! John, my—my cigar-box! There is not a cr in the world that can abide the fumes of the Havannah! Pshaw! sir, I am not the only man who lets his first thoughts upon cold steel end, like this chapter, in—Pff—pff—pff—!

CHAPTER IV.

EVERYTHING in this world is of use, even a black thing crawling over the nape of one's neck! Grim unknown! I shall make of thee—a simile.

I think, ma'am, you will allow that if an incident such as I have described had befallen yourself, and you had a proper and lady-like horror of earwigs (however motherly and fond of their offspring), and also of early hornets,—and indeed of all unknown things of the insect tribe with black heads and two great horns, or feelers, or forceps, just by your ear—I think, ma'am, you will allow that you would find it difficult to settle back to your former placidity of mood and innocent stitch-work. You would feel a something that grated on your nerves—and cr'd-cr'd "all over you like," as the children say. And the worst is, that you would be ashamed to say it. You would feel obliged to look pleased and join in the conversation, and not fidget too much, nor always be shaking your flounces, and looking into a dark corner of your apron. Thus it is with many other things in life besides black insects. One has a secret care—an abstraction—a something between the memory and the feeling, of a dark crawling cr, which one has never dared to analyze. So I sat by my mother, trying to smile and talk as in the old time,—but longing to move about and look around, and escape to my own solitude, and take the clothes off my mind, and see what it was that had so troubled and terrified me—for trouble and terror were upon me. And my mother, who was always (heaven bless her!) inquisitive enough in all that concerned her darling Anachronism, was especially inquisitive that evening. She made me say where I had been, and what I had done, and how I had spent my time,—and Fanny Trevanion (whom she had seen, by the way, three or four times, and whom she thought the prettiest person in the world)—oh, she must know exactly what I thought of Fanny Trevanion!

And all this while my father seemed in thought; and so, with my arm over my mother's chair, and my hand in hers, I answered my mother's questions—sometimes by a stammer, sometimes by a violent effort at volubility; when at some interrogatory that went tingling right to my heart, I turned uneasily, and there were my father's eyes fixed on mine. Fixed as they had been—when, and none knew why, I pined and languished, and my father said "he must go to school." Fixed, with quiet watchful tenderness. Ah no!—his thoughts had not been on the Great Work—he had been deep in the pages of that less worthy one for which he had yet more an author's paternal care. I met those eyes, and yearned to throw myself on his heart—and tell him all. Tell him what? Ma'am, I no more knew what to tell him, than I know what that black thing was which has so worried me all this blessed evening!

"Pisistratus," said my father softly, "I fear you have forgotten the saffron bag."

"No, indeed, sir," said I, smiling.

"He," resumed my father,—"he who wears the saffron bag has more cheerful, settled spirits than you seem to have, my poor boy."

"My dear Austin, his spirits are very good, I think," said my mother, anxiously.

My father shook his head—then he took two or three turns about the room.

"Shall I ring for candles, sir? It is getting dark: you will wish to read?"

"No, Pisistratus, it is you who shall read, and this hour of twilight best suits the book I am about to open to you."

So saying, he drew a chair between me and my mother, and seated himself gravely, looking down a long time in silence—then turning his eyes to each of us alternately.

"My dear wife," said he, at length, almost solemnly, "I am going to speak of myself as I was before I knew you."

Even in the twilight I saw that my mother's countenance changed.

"You have respected my secrets, Katherine, tenderly—honesty. Now the time is come when I can tell them to you and to our son."

CHAPTER V.

MY FATHER'S FIRST LOVE.

"I LOST my mother early; my father (a good man, but who was so indolent that he

rarely stirred from his chair, and who often passed whole days without speaking, like an Indian dervish) left Roland and myself to educate ourselves much according to our own tastes. Roland shot, and hunted, and fished,—read all the poetry and books of chivalry to be found in my father's collection, which was rich in such matters, and made a great many copies of the old pedigree;—the only thing in which my father ever evinced much vital interest. Early in life I conceived a passion for graver studies, and by good luck I found a tutor in Mr. Tibbets, who, but for his modesty, Kitty, would have rivalled Porson. He was a second Budæus for industry, and by the way, he said exactly the same thing that Budæus did, viz. 'that the only lost day in his life was that in which he was married; for on that day he had only had six hours for reading!' Under such a master I could not fail to be a scholar. I came from the university with such distinction as led me to look sanguinely on my career in the world.

"I returned to my father's quiet rectory to pause and consider what path I should take to fame. The rectory was just at the foot of the hill, on the brow of which were the ruins of the castle Roland has since purchased. And though I did not feel for the ruins the same romantic veneration as my dear brother (for my day dreams were more colored by classic than feudal recollections), I yet loved to climb the hill, book in hand, and built my castles in the air amidst the wrecks of that which time had shattered on the earth.

"One day, entering the old weed-grown court, I saw a lady seated on my favorite spot, sketching the ruins. The lady was young—more beautiful than any woman I had yet seen, at least to my eyes. In a word, I was fascinated, and, as the trite phrase goes, 'spell-bound.' I seated myself at a little distance, and contemplated her without desiring to speak. By and by, from another part of the ruins, which were then uninhabited, came a tall, imposing, elderly gentleman, with a benignant aspect; and a little dog. The dog ran up to me barking. This drew the attention of both lady and gentleman to me. The gentleman approached, called off the dog, and apologized with much politeness. Surveying me somewhat curiously, he then began to ask questions about the old place and the family it had belonged to, with the name and antecedents of which he was well acquainted. By degrees it came out that I was the descendant of that family, and the younger son of the humble rector who was now its representative. The gentleman then introduced himself to me as the Earl of Rainsforth, the principal proprietor in the neighborhood, but who had so rarely visited the county during my childhood and earlier youth that I had never before seen him. His only son, however, a young man of great promise, had been at the same college with me in my first year at the university. The young lord was a reading man and a scholar; and we had become slightly acquainted when he left for his travels.

"Now, on hearing my name, Lord Rainsforth took my hand cordially, and, leading me to his daughter, said, 'Think, Ellinor, how fortunate!—this is the Mr. Caxton whom your brother so often spoke of.'

"In short, my dear Pisistratus, the ice was broken, the acquaintance made, and Lord Rainsforth, saying he was come to atone for his long absence from the county, and to reside at Compton the greater part of the year, pressed me to visit him. I did so. Lord Rainsforth's liking to me increased: I went there often."

My father paused, and seeing my mother had fixed her eyes upon him with a sort of mournful earnestness, and had pressed her hands very tightly together, he bent down and kissed her forehead.

"There is no cause, my child!" said he. It was the only time I ever heard him address my mother so parentally. But then I never heard him before so grave and solemn—not a quotation, too—it was incredible: it was not my father speaking, it was another man.

"Yes, I went there often. Lord Rainsforth was a remarkable person. Shyness, that was wholly without pride (which is rare), and a love for quiet literary pursuits, had prevented his taking that personal part in public life for which he very richly qualified; but his reputation for sense and honor, and his personal popularity, had given him no inconsiderable influence even, I believe,

in the formation of cabinets, and he had once been prevailed upon to fill a high diplomatic situation abroad, in which I have no doubt that he was as miserable as a good man can be under any infliction. He was now pleased to retire from the world, and look at it through the loopholes of retreat. Lord Rainsforth had a great respect for talent, and a warm interest in such of the young as seemed to him to possess it. By talent, indeed, his family had risen, and were stringly characterized. His ancestor, the first peer, had been a distinguished lawyer; his father had been celebrated for scientific attainments; his children, Ellinor and Lord Pendarvis, were highly accomplished. Thus the family identified themselves with the aristocracy of intellect, and seemed unconscious of their claims to the lower aristocracy of rank. You must bear this in mind throughout my story.

"Lady Ellinor shared her father's tastes and habits of thought—(she was not then an heiress). Lord Rainsforth talked to me of my career. It was a time when the French Revolution had made statesmen look round with some anxiety to strengthen the existing order of things, by alliance with all in the rising generation who evinced such ability as might influence their contemporaries.

"University distinction is, or was formerly, among the popular passports to public life. By degrees, Lord Rainsforth liked me so well as to suggest to me a seat in the House of Commons. A member of Parliament might rise to anything, and Lord Rainsforth had sufficient influence to effect my return. Dazzling prospect this to a young scholar fresh from Thucydides, and with Demosthenes fresh at his tongue's end. My dear boy, I was not then, you see, quite what I am now; in a word I loved Ellinor Compton, and therefore I was ambitious. You know how ambitious she is still. But I could not mould my ambition to hers. I could not contemplate entering the senate of my country as a dependent on a party or a patron—as a man who must make his fortune there—as a man who, in every vote, must consider how much nearer he advanced himself to emolument. I was not even certain that Lord Rainsforth's views on politics were the same as mine would be. How could the politics of an experienced man of the world be those of an ardent young student? But had they been identical, I felt that I could not so creep into equality with a patron's daughter. No! I was ready to abandon my own more scholastic predilections—to strain every energy at the bar—to carve or force my own way to fortune—and if I arrived at independence, then—what then? why, the right to speak of love, and aim at power. This was not the view of Ellinor Compton. The law seemed to her a tedious, needless drudgery: there was nothing in it to captivate her imagination. She listened to me with that charm which she yet retains, and by which she seems to identify herself with those who speak to her. She would turn to me with a pleading look when her father dilated on the brilliant prospects of a parliamentary success; for he (not having gained it, yet having lived with those who had) overvalued it, and seemed ever to wish to enjoy it through some other. But when I, in turn, spoke of independence, of the bar, Ellinor's face grew overcast. The world—the world was with her, and the ambition of the world, which is always for power or effect! A part of the house lay exposed to the east wind. 'Plant half-way down the hill,' said I one day. 'Plant!' cried Lady Ellinor—'it will be twenty years before the trees grow up. No, my dear father, build a wall and cover it with creepers!' That was an illustration of her whole character. She could not wait till trees had time to grow; a dead wall would be so much more quickly thrown up, and parasite creepers would give it a prettier effect. Nevertheless, she was a grand and noble creature. And I—in love! Not so discouraged as you may suppose; for Lord Rainsforth often hinted encouragement, which even I could scarcely misconstrue. Not caring for rank, and not wishing for fortune beyond competence for his daughter, he saw in me all he required—a gentleman of ancient birth, and one in whom his own active mind could prosecute that kind of mental ambition which overflowed in him, and yet had never had its vent. And Ellinor!—Heaven forbid I should say she loved me,—but something made me think she could do

so. Under these notions, suppressing all my hopes, I made a bold effort to master the influences round me, and to adopt that career I thought worthiest of us all. I went to London to read for the bar."

"The bar! is it possible?" cried I. My father smiled sadly.

"Everything seemed possible to me then. I read some months. I began to see my way even in this short time; began to comprehend what would be the difficulties before me, and to feel there was that within me which could master them. I took a holiday and returned to Cumberland. I found Roland there on my return. Always of a roving, adventurous temper, though he had not then entered the army, he had, for more than two years, been wandering over Great Britain and Ireland on foot. It was a young knight-errant whom I embraced, and who overwhelmed me with reproaches that I should be reading for the law. There had never been a lawyer in the family! It was about that time, I think, that I petrified him with the discovery of the printer! I knew not exactly wherefore, whether from jealousy, fear, foreboding—but it certainly *was* a pain that seized me—when I learned from Roland that he had become intimate at Compton Hall. Roland and Lord Rainsforth had met at the house of a neighboring gentleman, and Lord Rainsforth had welcomed his acquaintance, at first, perhaps, for my sake, afterwards for his own.

"I could not for the life of me," continued my father, "ask Roland if he admired Ellinor; but when I found that he did not put that question to me, I trembled!

"We went to Compton together, speaking little by the way. We stayed there some days."

My father here thrust his hand into his waistcoat—all men have their little ways, which denote much; and when my father thrust his hand into his waistcoat, it was always a sign of some mental effort—he was going to prove, or to argue, to moralize, or to preach. Therefore, though I was listening before with all my ears, I believe I had, speaking magnetically and mesmerically, an extra pair of ears, a new sense supplied to me when my father put his hand into his waistcoat.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEREIN MY FATHER CONTINUES HIS STORY.

"THERE is not a mystical creation, type, symbol, or poetical invention for meanings abstruse, recondite, and incomprehensible, which is not represented by the female gender," said my father, having his hand quite buried in his waitcoat. "For instance, the Sphynx and Isis, whose veil no man had ever lifted, were both ladies, Kitty! And so was Persephone, who must be always either in heaven or hell—and Hecate, who was one thing by night and another by day. The Sibyls were females; and so were the Gorgons, the Harpies, the Furies, the Fates, and the Teutonic Valkyrs, Nornies, and Hela herself: in short, all representations of ideas, obscure, inscrutable, and portentous, are nouns feminine."

Heaven bless my father! Augustine Caxton was himself again! I began to fear that the story had slipped away from him, lost in that labyrinth of learning. But, luckily, as he paused for breath, his look fell on those limpid blue eyes of my mother's, and that honest open brow of hers, which had certainly nothing in common with Sphynges, Fates, Furies, or Valkyrs; and, whether his heart smote him, or his reason made him own that he had fallen into a very disingenuous and unsound train of assertion, I know not, but his front relaxed, and with a smile he resumed—"Ellinor was the last person in the world to deceive any one willingly. Did she deceive me and Roland that we both, though not conceited men, fancied that, if we had dared to speak openly of love, we had not so dared in vain? or do you think, Kitty, that a woman really can love (not much, perhaps, but somewhat) two or three, or half-a-dozen at a time?"

"Impossible!" cried my mother. "And as for this Lady Ellinor, I am shocked at her—I don't know what to call it!"

"Nor I either, my dear," said my father, slowly taking his hand from his waistcoat, as if the effort were too much for him, and the problem were insoluble. "But this, begging your pardon, I do think, that before a young woman does really, truly, and cordially centre her affections on one object, she suffers fancy,

imagination, the desire of power, curiosity, or heaven knows what, to simulate even to her own mind, pale reflections of the luminary not yet risen—parhelia that precede the sun. Don't judge of Roland as you see him now, Pisistratus—grim, and gray, and formal; imagine a nature soaring high amongst daring thoughts, or exuberant with the nameless poetry of youthful life—with a frame matchless for bounding elasticity—an eye bright with haughty fire—a heart from which noble sentiments sprang like sparks from an anvil. Lady Ellinor had an ardent, inquisitive imagination. This bold fiery nature must have moved her interest. On the other hand, she had an instructed, full, and eager mind. Am I vain if I say, now after the lapse of so many years, that in my mind her intellect felt companionship?

"When a woman loves, and marries, and settles, why then she becomes—a one whole, a completed being. But a girl like Ellinor has in her many women. Various herself, all varieties please her. I do believe that, if either of us had spoken the word boldly, Lady Ellinor would have shrunk back to her own heart—examined it, tasked it, and given a frank and generous answer. And he who had spoken first might have had the better chance not to receive a 'No.' But neither of us spoke. And perhaps she was rather curious to know if she had made an impression, than anxious to create it. It was not that she willingly deceived us, but her whole atmosphere was delusion. Mists come before the sunrise. However this be, Roland and I were not long in detecting each other. And hence arose, first coldness, then jealousy, then quarrel."

"Oh, my father, your love must have been indeed powerful, to have made a breach between the hearts of two such brothers!"

"Yes," said my father; "it was amidst the old ruins of the castle, there, where I had first seen Ellinor—that, winding my arm round Roland's neck, as I found him seated amongst the weeds and stones, his face buried in his hands—it was there that I said—'Brother, we both love this woman! My nature is the calmer of the two, I shall feel the loss less. Brother, shake hands, and God speed you, for I go!'"

"Austin!" murmured my mother, sinking her head on my father's breast.

"And therewith we quarrelled. For it was Roland who insisted, while the tears rolled down his eyes, and he stamped his foot on the ground, that he was the intruder, the interloper—that he had no hope—that he had been a fool and a madman—and that it was for him to go! Now, while we were disputing, and words began to run high, my father's old servant entered the desolate place, with a note from Lady Ellinor to me, asking for the loan of some book I had praised. Roland saw the handwriting, and while I turned the note over and over irresolutely, before I broke the seal, he vanished.

"He did not return to my father's house. We did not know what had become of him. But I, thinking over that impulsive volcanic nature, took quick alarm. And I went in search of him; came on his track at last; and, after many days, found him in a miserable cottage amongst the most dreary of the dreary wastes which form so large a part of Cumberland. He was so altered I scarcely knew him. To be brief, we came at last to a compromise. We would go back to Compton. This suspense was intolerable. One of us at least should take courage and learn his fate. But who should speak first? We drew lots, and the lot fell on me.

"And now that I was really to pass the Rubicon, now that I was to impart that secret hope which had animated me so long—been to me a new life—what were my sensations? My dear boy, depend on it that that age is the happiest, when such feelings as I felt then can agitate us no more. They are mistakes in the serene order of that majestic life which heaven meant for thoughtful man. Our souls should be as stars on earth, not as meteors and tortured comets. What could I offer to Ellinor—to her father? What but a future of patient labor? And in either answer, what alternative of misery!—my own existence shattered, or Roland's noble heart!

"Well, we went to Compton. In our former visits we had been almost the only guests. Lord Rainsforth did not much affect the intercourse of country squires, less educated then than now. And in excuse for Ellinor and for us, we were almost the only men of

our own age she had seen in that large dull house. But now the London season had broken up, the house was filled; there was no longer that familiar and constant approach to the mistress of the Hall, which had made us like one family. Great ladies, fine people were round her; a look, a smile, a passing word were as much as I had a right to expect. And the talk, too, how different! Before, I could speak on books, —I was at home there! Roland could pour forth his dreams, his chivalrous love for the past, his bold defiance of the unknown future. And Ellinor, cultivated and fanciful, could sympathize with both. And her father, scholar and gentleman, could sympathize too. But now—"

CHAPTER VII.

WHEREIN MY FATHER BRINGS OUT HIS DENOUEMENT.

"It is no use in the world," said my father, "to know all the languages expounded in grammars and splintered up into lexicons, if we don't learn the language of the world. It is a talk apart, Kitty," cried my father, warming up. "It is an ANAGLYPH—a spoken anaglyph, my dear! If all the hieroglyphs of the Egyptians had been A B C to you, still if you did not know the anaglyph, you would know nothing of the true mysteries of the priests.*

"Neither Roland nor I knew one symbol letter of the anaglyph. Talk, talk—talk on persons we never heard of, things we never cared for. All *we* thought of importance, puerile or pedantic trifles—all we thought so trite and childish, the grand momentous business of life! If you found a little schoolboy, on his half holiday, fishing for minnows with a crooked pin, and you began to tell him of all the wonders of the deep, the laws of the tides, and the antediluvian relics of iguanodon and ichthyosaurus—nay, if you spoke but of pearl fisheries, and coral banks, or water kelpies and naïads, would not the little boy cry out peevishly, 'Don't tease me with all that nonsense! let me fish in peace for my minnows.' I think the little boy is right after his own way—it was to fish for minnows that he came out, poor child, not to hear about iguanodons and water-kelpies!

"So the company fished for minnows, and not a word could we say about our pearl fisheries and coral banks! And as for fishing for minnows ourselves, my dear boy, we should have been less bewildered if you had asked us to fish for a mermaid! Do you see, now, one reason why I have let you go thus early into the world? Well, but amongst these minnow-fishers there was one who fished with an air that made the minnows look larger than salmons.

"Trevanion had been at Cambridge with me. We were even intimate. He was a young man like myself, with his way to make in the world. Poor as I—of a family upon a par with mine—old enough, but decayed. There was, however, this difference between us. He had connections in the great world —I had none. Like me, his chief pecuniary resource was a college fellowship. Now, Trevanion had established a high reputation at the University; but less as a scholar, though a pretty fair one, than as a man to rise in life. Every faculty he had was an energy. He aimed at everything—lost some things, gained others. He was a great speaker in a debating society, a member of some politico-economical club. He was an eternal talker—brilliant, various, paradoxical, florid—different from what he is now. For, dreading fancy, his career since has been one effort to curb it.

"But all his mind attached itself to something that we Englishmen call solid: it was a large mind—not, my dear Kitty, like a fine whale sailing through knowledge from the pleasure of sailing—but like a polypus, that puts forth all its feelers for the purpose of catching hold of something. Trevanion had gone at once to London from the University: his reputation and his talk dazzled his connections, not unjustly. They made an effort—they got him into Parliament: he had spoken, he had succeeded. He came to Compton in the flush of his virgin fame. I cannot convey to you who know him now

* The anaglyph was peculiar to the Egyptian priests—the hieroglyph generally known to the well educated.

—with his careworn face, and abrupt dry manner,—reduced by perpetual gladiatorship to the skin and bone of his former self—what that man was when he first stepped into the arena of life.

"You see, my listeners, that you have to recollect that we middle-aged folks were young then—that is to say, we were as different from what we are now, as the green bough of summer is from the dry wood, out of which we make a ship or a gate-post. Neither man nor wood comes to the uses of life till the green leaves are stripped and the sap gone. And then the uses of life transform us into strange things with other names: the tree is a tree no more—it is a gate or a ship; the youth is a youth no more, but a one-legged soldier; a hollow-eyed statesman; a scholar spectacled and slippered! When Micyllus—(here the hand slides into the waistcoat again!)—when Micyllus," said my father, "asked the cock that had once been Pythagoras,* if the affair of Troy was really as Homer told it, the cock replied scornfully, 'How could Homer know anything about it?—at that time he was a camel in Bactria.' Pisistratus, according to the doctrine of metempsychosis, you might have been a Bactrian camel—when that which to my life was the siege of Troy saw Roland and Trevanion before the walls.

"Handsome you can see that Trevanion has been; but the beauty of his countenance then was in its perpetual play, its intellectual eagerness; and his conversation was so discursive, so various, so animated, and above all, so full of the things of the day! If he had been a priest of Serapis for fifty years, he could not have known the Anaglyph better! Therefore he filled up every crevice and pore of that hollow society with his broken, inquisitive, petulant light. Therefore he was admired, talked of, listened to; and everybody said, 'Trevanion is a rising man.'

"Yet I did not do him then the justice I have done since—for we students and abstract thinkers are apt too much, in our first youth, to look to the *depth* of a man's mind or knowledge, and not enough to the *surface* it may cover. There may be more water in a flowing stream, only four feet deep, and certainly more force and more health, than in a sullen pool, thirty yards to the bottom. I did not do Trevanion justice. I did not see how naturally he realized Lady Ellinor's ideal. I have said that she was like many women in one. Trevanion was a thousand men in one. He had learning to please her mind, eloquence to dazzle her fancy, beauty to please her eye, reputation precisely of the kind to allure her vanity, honor and conscientious purpose to satisfy her judgment. And, above all, he was ambitious. Ambitious not as I—not as Roland was, but ambitious as Ellinor was: ambitious, not to realize some grand ideal in the silent heart, but to grasp the practical positive substances that lay without.

"Ellinor was a child of the great world, and so was he.

"I saw not all this, nor did Roland; and Trevanion seemed to pay no particular court to Ellinor.

"But the time approached when I ought to speak. The house began to thin. Lord Rainsforth had leisure to resume his easy conferences with me; and one day, walking in his garden, he gave me the opportunity. For I need not say, Pisistratus," said my father, looking at me earnestly, "that before any man of honor, if of inferior worldly pretensions, will open his heart seriously to the daughter, it is his duty to speak first to the parent, whose confidence has imposed that trust." I bowed my head, and colored.

"I know not how it was," continued my father, "but Lord Rainsforth turned the conversation on Ellinor. After speaking of his expectations in his son, who was returning home, he said, 'But he will of course enter public life—will, I trust, soon marry, have a separate establishment, and I shall see but little of him. My Ellinor!—I cannot bear the thought of parting wholly with her. And that, to say the selfish truth, is one reason why I have never wished her to marry a rich man, and so leave me for ever. I could hope that she will give herself to one who may be contented to reside at least great part of the year with me—who may bless me with another son, not steal from me a daughter. I do not mean that he should waste his life in the country; his occupations would probably lead him to London. I care not where

* LUCIAN, *The Dream of Micyllus.*

my *house* is—all I want is to keep my *home*. You know' (he added, with a smile that I thought meaning,) 'how often I have implied to you that I have no vulgar ambition for Ellinor. Her portion must be very small, for my estate is strictly entailed, and I have lived too much up to my income all my life to hope to save much now. But her tastes do not require expense; and while I live, at least, there need be no change. She can only prefer a man whose talents, congenial to hers, will win their own career, and ere I die that career may be made.' Lord Rainsforth paused; and then—how, in what words I know not—but out all burst!—my long-suppressed, timid, anxious, doubtful, fearful love. The strange energy it had given to a nature till then so retiring and calm! My recent devotion to the law—my confidence that, with such a prize I could succeed—it was but a transfer of labor from one study to another. Labor could conquer all things, and custom sweeten them in the conquest. The bar was a less brilliant career than the senate. But the first aim of the poor man should be independence. In short, Pisistratus, wretched egotist that I was, I forgot Roland in that moment; and I spoke as one who felt his life was in his words.

"Lord Rainsforth looked at me, when I had done, with a countenance full of affection, but it was not cheerful.

"'My dear Caxton,' said he, tremulously, 'I own that I once wished this—wished it from the hour I knew you; but why did you so long—I never suspected that—nor, I am sure, did Ellinor.' He stopped short, and added quickly—'However, go and speak, as you have spoken to me, to Ellinor. Go, it may not yet be too late. And yet—but go.'

"Too late!—what meant those words? Lord Rainsforth had turned hastily down another walk, and left me alone, to ponder over an answer which concealed a riddle. Slowly I took my way towards the house, and sought Lady Ellinor, half hoping, half dreading to find her alone. There was a little room communicating with a conservatory, where she usually sat in the morning. Thither I took my course.

"That room, I see it still!—the walls covered with pictures from her own hand, many were sketches of the haunts we had visited together—the simple ornaments, womanly but not effeminate—the very books on the table, that had been made familiar by dear associations. Yes; there, the *Tasso* in which we had read together the episode of *Clorinda*—there, the *Æschylus* in which I translated to her the *Prometheus*. Pedantries these might seem to some; pedantries, perhaps, they were; but they were proofs of that congeniality which had knit the man of books to the daughter of the world. That room, it was the home of my heart. Such, in my vanity of spirit, methought would be the air round a home to come. I looked about me, troubled and confused, and, halting timidly, I saw Ellinor before me, leaning her face on her hand, her cheek more flushed than usual, and tears in her eyes. I approached in silence, and, as I drew my chair to the table, my eye fell on a glove on the floor. It was a man's glove. Do you know," said my father, "that once, when I was very young, I saw a Dutch picture called The Glove, and the subject was of murder. There was a weed-grown marshy pool, a desolate dismal landscape, that of itself inspired thoughts of ill-deeds and terror. And two men, as if walking by chance, came to this pool; the finger of one pointed to a blood-stained glove, and the eyes of both were fixed on each other, as if there were no need of words. That glove told its tale! The picture had long haunted me in my boyhood, but it never gave me so uneasy and fearful a feeling as did that real glove upon the floor. Why? My dear Pisistratus, the theory of forebodings involves one of those questions on which we may ask 'why' for ever. More chilled than I had been in speaking to her father, I took heart at last, and spoke to Ellinor"—

My father stopped short, the moon had risen, and was shining full into the room and on his face. And by that light the face was changed; young emotions had brought back youth—my father looked a young man. But what pain was there! If the memory alone could raise what, after all, was but the ghost of suffering, what had been its living reality! Involuntarily I seized his hand; my father pressed it convulsively, and said, with a deep breath—"It was too late; Trevanion

was Lady Ellinor's accepted, plighted, happy lover. My dear Katherine, I do not envy him now; look up, sweet wife! look up!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"Ellinor (let me do her justice) was shocked at my silent emotion. No human lip could utter more tender sympathy, more noble self-reproach; but that was no balm to my wound. So I left the house; so I never returned to the law; so all impetus, all motive for exertion, seemed taken from my being; so I went back into books. And so, a moping, despondent, worthless mourner might I have been to the end of my days, but that heaven, in its mercy, sent thy mother, Pisistratus, across my path; and day and night I bless God and her, for I have been, and am—oh, indeed, I am, a happy man!"

My mother threw herself on my father's breast, sobbing violently, and then turned from the room without a word—my father's eye, swimming in tears, followed her; and then, after pacing the room for some moments in silence, he came up to me, and leaning his arm on my shoulder, whispered, "Can you guess why I have now told you all this, my son?"

"Yes, partly: thank you, father," I faltered, and sat down, for I felt faint.

"Some sons," said my father, seating himself beside me, "would find in their father's follies and errors an excuse for their own; not so will you, Pisistratus."

"I see no folly, no error, sir; only nature and sorrow."

"Pause ere you thus think," said my father. "Great was the folly, and great the error, of indulging imagination that had no basis—of linking the whole usefulness of my life to the will of a human creature like myself. Heaven did not design the passion of love to be this tyrant; nor is it so with the mass and multitude of human life. We dreamers, solitary students like me, or half-poets like poor Roland, make our own disease. How many years, even after I had regained serenity, as your mother gave me a home long not appreciated, have I wasted! The mainstring of my existence was snapped—I took no note of time. And therefore now, you see, late in life, Nemesis wakes. I look back with regret at powers neglected, opportunities gone. Galvanically I brace up energies half-palsied by disuse; and you see me, rather than rest quiet and good for nothing, talked into what, I daresay, are sad follies, by an Uncle Jack! And now I behold Ellinor again; and I say in wonder, 'All this—all this—all this agony, all this torpor, for that haggard face, that worldly spirit!' So is it ever in life. Mortal things fade; immortal things spring more freshly with every step to the tomb.

"Ah!" continued my father, with a sigh, "it would not have been so, if at your age I had found out the secret of the saffron bag!"

CHAPTER IX.

"And Roland, sir," said I—"how did he take it?"

"With all the indignation of a proud unreasonable man. More indignant, poor fellow, for me than himself. And so did he wound and gall me by what he said of Ellinor, and so did he rage against me because I would not share his rage, that again we quarrelled. We parted, and did not meet for many years. We came into sudden possession of our little fortunes. His he devoted (as you may know) to the purchase of the old ruins, and the commission in the army, which had always been his dream—and so went his way, wrathful. My share gave me an excuse for indolence—it satisfied all my wants; and when my old tutor died, and his young child became my ward, and, somehow or other, from my ward my wife, it allowed me to resign my fellowship, and live amongst my books—still as a book myself. One comfort, somewhat before my marriage, I had conceived; and that, too, Roland has since said was comfort to him. Ellinor became an heiress. Her poor brother died; and all of the estate that did not pass in the male line devolved on her. That fortune made a gulf between us almost as wide as her marriage. For Ellinor, poor and portionless, in spite of her rank, I could have worked, striven, slaved. But Ellinor

RICH ! it would have crushed me. This was a comfort. But still, still the past—that perpetual aching sense of something that had seemed the essential of life withdrawn from life, evermore, evermore !

"What was left was not sorrow, it was a void. Had I lived more with men, and less with dreams and books, I should have made my nature large enough to bear the loss of a single passion. But in solitude we shrink up. No plant so much as man needs the sun and the air. I comprehend now why most of our best and wisest men have lived in capitals; and therefore again I say, that one scholar in a family is enough. Confiding in your sound heart and strong honor, I turn you thus betimes on the world. Have I done wrong? Prove that I have not, my child. Do you know what a very good man has said ? Listen and follow my precept, not example.

" 'The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say aloud to every man, 'Do something—do it—do it !' " *

I was profoundly touched, and I rose refreshed and hopeful, when suddenly the door opened, and who or what in the world should come in; but certainly he, she, it, or they, shall not come into this chapter ! On that point I am resolved. No, my dear young lady, I am extremely flattered;—I feel for your curiosity; but really not a peep—not one ! And yet—well then, if you will have it, and look so coaxingly—who or what, I say, should come in abrupt, unexpected—taking away one's breath, not giving one time to say "By your leave, or with your leave," but making one's mouth stand open with surprise, and one's eyes fix in a big round stupid stare, but—

THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

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* *Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil*, p. 34.

PART EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

THERE entered, in the front drawing-room of my father's house in Russell Street—an Elf!!! clad in white,—small, delicate, with curls of jet over her shoulders;—with eyes so large and so lustrous that they shone through the room, as no eyes merely human could possibly shine. The Elf approached, and stood facing us. The sight was so unexpected, and the apparition so strange, that we remained for some moments in startled silence. At length my father, as the bolder and wiser man of the two, and the more fitted to deal with the eerie things of another world, had the audacity to step close up to the little creature, and, bending down to examine its face, said, "What do you want, my pretty child?"

Pretty child! was it only a pretty child after all? Alas, it would be well if all we mistake for fairies at the first glance could resolve themselves only into pretty children!

"Come," answered the child, with a foreign accent, and taking my father by the lappet of his coat, "come, poor papa is so ill! I am frightened! come—and save him——"

"Certainly," exclaimed my father, quickly: "where's my hat, Sisty? Certainly, my child, we will go and save papa."

"But who is papa?" asked Pisistratus—a question that would never have occurred to my father. He never asked who or what the sick papas of poor children were, when the children pulled him by the lappet of his coat—"Who is papa?"

The child looked hard at me, and the big tears rolled from those large luminous eyes, but quite silently. At this moment a full-grown figure filled up the threshold, and, emerging from the shadow, presented to us the aspect of a stout, well-favored young woman. She dropped a curtsey, and then said, mincingly,

"Oh, miss, you ought to have waited for me, and not alarmed the gentlefolks by running up-stairs in that way. If you please, sir, I was settling with the cabman, and he was so imperent: them low fellows always are, when they have only us poor women to deal with, sir,—and——"

"But what is the matter!" cried I, for my father had taken the child in his arms, soothingly, and she was now weeping on his breast.

"Why, you see, sir (another curtsey), the gent only arrived last night at our hotel, sir—The Lamb, close by Lunnun Bridge—and he was taken ill—and he's not quite in his right mind like:—so we sent for the doctor, and the doctor looked at the brass plate on the gent's carpet bag, sir,—and then he looked into the *Court Guide*, and he said, 'There is a Mr. Caxton in Great Russell Street,—is he any relation?' and this young lady said, 'That's my papa's brother, and we were going there.' And so, sir, as the Boots was out, I got into a cab, and miss would come with me, and——"

"Roland—Roland ill! Quick—quick, quick!" cried my father, and, with the child still in his arms, he ran down the stairs. I followed with his hat, which of course he had forgotten. A cab, by good luck, was passing our very door; but the chambermaid would not let us enter it till she had satisfied herself that it was not the same she had

dismissed. This preliminary investigation completed, we entered, and drove to The Lamb.

The chambermaid, who sate opposite, passed the time in ineffectual overtures to relieve my father of the little girl, who still clung nestling to his breast,—in a long epic, much broken into episodes, of the causes which had led to her dismissal of the late cabman, who, to swell his fare, had thought proper to take a "circumbendibus!"—and with occasional tugs at her cap, and smoothings down of her gown, and apologies for being such a figure, especially when her eyes rested on my satin cravat, or drooped on my shining boots.

Arrived at The Lamb, the chambermaid, with conscious dignity, led us up a large staircase, which seemed interminable. As she mounted the region above the third story, she paused to take breath, and inform us, apologetically, that the house was full, but that, if the "gent" stayed over Friday, he would be moved into No. 54, "with a look-out and a chimbly." My little cousin now slipped from my father's arms, and, running up the stairs, beckoned to us to follow. We did so, and were led to a door, at which the child stopped and listened; then, taking off her shoes, she stole in on tip-toe. We entered after her.

By the light of a single candle we saw my poor uncle's face: it was flushed with fever, and the eyes had that bright, vacant stare which it is so terrible to meet. Less terrible is it to find the body wasted, the features sharp with the great life-struggle, than to look on the face from which the mind is gone,—the eyes in which there is no recognition. Such a sight is a startling shock to that unconscious habitual materialism with which we are apt familiarly to regard those we love: for, in thus missing the mind, the heart, the affection that sprang to ours, we are suddenly made aware that it was the something *within* the form, and not the form itself, that was so dear to us. The form itself is still, perhaps, little altered; but that lip which smiles no welcome, that eye which wanders over us as strangers, that ear which distinguishes no more our voices,—the *friend* we sought is not there! Even our own love is chilled back—grows a kind of vague superstitious terror. Yes, it was not the matter still present to us, which had conciliated all those subtle nameless sentiments which are classed and fused in the word "*affection*," —it was the airy, intangible, electric *something*,—the absence of which now appals us.

I stood speechless—my father crept on, and took the hand that returned no pressure: —The child only did not seem to share our emotions,—but, clambering on the bed, laid her cheek on the breast and was still.

"Pisistratus," whispered my father at last, and I stole near, hushing my breath,—"Pisistratus, if your mother were here!"

I nodded: the same thought had struck us both. His deep wisdom, my active youth, both felt their nothingness then and there. In the sick chamber, both turned helplessly to miss the *woman*.

So I stole out, descended the stairs, and stood in the open air in a sort of stunned amaze. Then the tramp of feet, and the roll of wheels, and the great London roar, revived me. That contagion of practical life which lulls the heart and stimulates the brain,—what an intellectual mystery there is in its common atmosphere! In another moment I had singled out, like an inspiration, from a long file of those ministrants of our Trivia, the cab of the lightest shape and with the strongest horse, and was on my way, not to my mother's but to Dr. M—— H——, Manchester Square, whom I knew as the medical adviser to the Trevanions. Fortunately, that kind and able physician was at home, and he promised to be with the sufferer before I myself could join him. I then drove to Russell Street, and broke to my mother, as cautiously as I could, the intelligence with which I was charged.

When we arrived at The Lamb, we found the doctor already writing his prescription and injunctions: the activity of the treatment announced the danger. I flew for the surgeon who had been before called in. Happy those who are strange to that indescribable silent bustle which the sick-room at times presents—that conflict which seems almost hand to hand between life and death —when all the poor, unresisting, unconscious frame is given up to the war against its terrible enemy: the dark blood flowing—flowing; the hand on the pulse, the hushed sus-

pense, every look on the physician's bended brow; then the sinaplasms to the feet, and the ice to the head; and now and then, through the lull or the low whispers, the incoherent voice of the sufferer—babbling, perhaps, of green fields and fairy-land, while your hearts are breaking! Then, at length, the sleep—in that sleep, perhaps, the crisis—the breathless watch, the slow waking, the first *sane* words—the old smile again, only fainter—your gushing tears, your low—"Thank God! thank God!"

Picture all this; it is past: Roland has spoken—his sense has returned—my mother is leaning over him—his child's small hands are clasped round his neck—the surgeon, who has been there six hours, has taken up his hat, and smiles gaily as he nods farewell—and my father is leaning against the wall, his face covered with his hands.

CHAPTER II.

All this had been so sudden that, to use the trite phrase—for no other is so expressive—it was like a dream. I felt an absolute, an imperious want of solitude, of the open air. The swell of gratitude almost stifled me—the room did not seem large enough for my big heart. In early youth, if we find it difficult to control our feelings, so we find it difficult to vent them in the presence of others. On the spring side of twenty, if anything affects us, we rush to lock ourselves up in our room, or get away into the streets or the fields; in our earlier years we are still the savages of Nature, and we do as the poor brute does,—the wounded stag leaves the herd, and, if there is anything on a dog's faithful heart, he slinks away into a corner.

Accordingly, I stole out of the hotel, and wandered through the streets, which were quite deserted. It was about the first hour of dawn, the most comfortless hour there is, especially in London! But I only felt freshness in the raw air, and soothing in the desolate stillness. The love my uncle inspired was very remarkable in its nature: it was not like that quiet affection with which those advanced in life must usually content themselves, but connected with the more vivid interest that youth awakens. There was in him still so much of vivacity and fire, in his errors and crotchets so much of the self-delusion of youth, that one could scarce fancy him other than young.

Those Quixotic exaggerated notions of honor, that romance of sentiment, which no hardship, care, grief, disappointment, could wear away, (singular in a period when, at two-and-twenty, young men declare themselves *blasés!*) seemed to leave him all the charm of boyhood. A season in London had made me more a man of the world, older in heart than he was. Then, the sorrow that gnawed him with such silent sternness. No, Captain Roland was one of those men who seize hold of your thoughts, who mix themselves up with your lives. The idea that Roland should die—die with the load at his heart unlightened, was one that seemed to take a spring out of the wheels of nature, an object out of the aims of life—of my life at least. For I had made it one of the ends of my existence to bring back the son to the father, and restore the smile that must have been gay once, to the downward curve of that iron lip. But Roland was now out of danger,—and yet, like one who has escaped shipwreck, I trembled to look back on the danger past; the voice of the devouring deep still boomed in my ears. While rapt in my reveries, I stopped mechanically to hear a clock strike—four; and, looking round, I perceived that I had wandered from the heart of the city, and was in one of the streets that lead out of the Strand. Immediatcly before me, on the doorsteps of a large shop whose closed shutters wore as obstinate a stillness as if they had guarded the secrets of seventeen centuries in a street in Pompeii,—reclined a form fast asleep; the arm propped on the hard stone supporting the head, and the limbs uneasily strewn over the stairs. The dress of the slumberer was travel-stained, tattered, yet with the remains of a certain pretence: an air of faded, shabby, penniless gentility made poverty more painful, because it seemed to indicate unfitness to grapple with it. The face of this person was hollow and pale, but its expression, even in sleep, was fierce and hard. I drew near and nearer; I recognized the countenance, the regular feat-

ures, the raven hair, even a peculiar gracefulness of posture: the young man whom I had met at the inn by the way-side, and who had left me alone with the Savoyard and his mice in the churchyard, was before me. I remained behind the shadow of one of the columns of the porch, leaning against the area rails and irresolute whether or not so slight an acquaintance justified me in waking the sleeper, when a policeman, suddenly emerging from an angle in the street, terminated my deliberations with the decision of his practical profession; for he laid hold of the young man's arm and shook it roughly, —"You must not lie here; get up and go home!" The sleeper woke with a quick start, rubbed his eyes, looked round and fixed them upon the policeman so haughtily, that that discriminating functionary probably thought that it was not from sheer necessity that so improper a couch had been selected, and with an air of greater respect he said, "You have been drinking, young man,—can you find your way home?"

"Yes," said the youth, resettling himself, "you see I have found it!"

"By the Lord Harry!" muttered the policeman, "if he ben't going to sleep again! Come, come, walk on, or I must walk you off."

My old acquaintance turned round. "Policeman," said he, with a strange sort of smile, "what do you think this lodging is worth? —I don't say for the night, for you see that is over, but for the next two hours? The lodging is primitive, but it suits me; I should think a shilling would be a fair price for it —eh?"

"You love your joke, sir," said the policeman, with a brow much relaxed, and opening his hand mechanically.

"Say a shilling, then—it is a bargain! I hire it of you upon credit. Good-night, and call me at six o'clock."

With that the young man settled himself so resolutely, and the policeman's face exhibited such bewilderment, that I burst out laughing, and came from my hiding-place.

The policeman looked at me. "Do you know this—this——"

"This gentleman?" said I, gravely. "Yes, you may leave him to me;" and I slipped the price of the lodging into the policeman's hand. He looked at the shilling—he looked at me—he looked up the street and down the street—shook his head, and walked off. I then approached the youth, touched him, and said—"Can you remember me, sir; and what have you done with Mr. Peacock?"

STRANGER (after a pause).—"I remember you; your name is Caxton."

PISISTRATUS.—"And yours?"

STRANGER.—"Poor-devil, if you ask my pockets—pockets, which are the symbols of man; Dare-devil, if you ask my heart. (Surveying me from head to foot)—The world seems to have smiled on you, Mr. Caxton! Are you not ashamed to speak to a wretch lying on the stones?—but, to be sure, no one sees you."

PISISTRATUS (sententiously).—"Had I lived in the last century, I might have found Samuel Johnson lying on the stones."

STRANGER (rising).—"You have spoilt my sleep; you had a right, since you paid for the lodging. Let me walk with you a few paces; you need not fear—I do not pick pockets—yet!"

PISISTRATUS.—"You say the world has smiled on me; I fear it has frowned on you. I don't say 'courage,' for you seem to have enough of that; but I say '*patience*,' which is the rarer quality of the two."

STRANGER.—"Hem!—(again looking at me keenly)—Why is it that you stop to speak to me—one of whom you know nothing, or worse than nothing?"

PISISTRATUS.—"Because I have often thought of you; because you interest me; because—pardon me—I would help you if I can—that is, if you want help."

STRANGER.—"Want!—I am one want! I want sleep—I want food;—I want the patience you recommend—patience to starve and rot. I have travelled from Paris to Boulogne on foot, with twelve sous in my pocket. Out of those twelve sous in my pocket I saved four; with the four I went to a billiard-room at Boulogne; I won just enough to pay my passage and buy three rolls. You see I only require capital in order to make a fortune. If with four sous I can win ten francs in a night, what could I win with a capital of four sovereigns, and in the course of a year?—that is an application of the Rule of Three, which my head aches too

much to calculate just at present. Well, those three rolls have lasted me three days; the last crumb went for supper last night. Therefore, take care how you offer me money (for that is what men mean by help). You see I have no option but to take it. But I warn you, don't expect gratitude !—I have none in me ! "

PISISTRATUS.—" You are not so bad as you paint yourself. I would do something more for you, if I can, than lend you the little I have to offer. Will you be frank with me ? "

STRANGER.—" That depends—I have been frank enough hitherto, I think."

PISISTRATUS.—" True; so I proceed without scruple. Don't tell me your name or your condition, if you object to such confidence; but tell me if you have relations to whom you can apply ? You shake your head: well, then, are you willing to work for yourself ? or is it only at the billiard table (pardon me) that you can try to make four sous produce ten francs ! "

STRANGER (musing).—I understand you. I have never worked yet—I abhor work. But I have no objection to try if it is in me."

PISISTRATUS.—" It is in you: a man who can walk from Paris to Boulogne with twelve sous in his pocket, and save four for a purpose—who can stake those four on the cool confidence in his own skill, even at billiards —who can subsist for three days on three rolls—and who, on the fourth day, can wake from the stones of a capital with an eye and a spirit as proud as yours, has in him all the requisites to subdue fortune."

STRANGER.—Do you work ?—you ? "

PISISTRATUS.—" Yes—and hard."

STRANGER.—" I am ready to work, then."

PISISTRATUS.—" Good. Now, what can you do ? "

STRANGER (with his odd smile).—" Many things useful. I can split a bullet on a penknife: I know the secret tierce of Coulon, the fencing-master: I can speak two languages (besides English) like a native, even to their slang: I know every game in the cards: I can act comedy, tragedy, farce: I can drink down Bacchus himself. I can make any woman I please in love with me—that is, any woman good-for-nothing. Can I earn a handsome livelihood out of all this —wear kid gloves, and set up a cabriolet ? You see my wishes are modest ! "

PISISTRATUS.—" You speak two languages, you say, like a native—French, I suppose, is one of them ? "

STRANGER.—" Yes."

PISISTRATUS.—" Will you teach it ? "

STRANGER (haughtily).—"No. *Je suis gentilhomme*, which means more or less than a gentleman. *Gentilhomme* means well born, because free born—teachers are slaves ! "

PISISTRATUS (unconsciously imitating Mr. Trevanion).—" Stuff ! "

STRANGER (looks angry, and then laughs). —" Very true; stilts don't suit shoes like these ! But I cannot teach; heaven help those *I* should teach !—anything else ? "

PISISTRATUS. — " Anything else ! — you leave me a wide margin. You know French thoroughly—to write as well as speak ?—that is much. Give me some address where I can find you—or will you call on me ? "

STRANGER.—" No ! Any evening at dusk I will meet you. I have no address to give; and I cannot show these rags at another man's door."

PISISTRATUS.—" At nine in the evening, then, and here in the Strand, on Thursday next. I may then have found something that will suit you. Meanwhile "—(slides his purse into the Stranger's hand. N.B.—Purse not very full.)

Stranger, with the air of one conferring a favor, pockets the purse; and there is something so striking in the very absence of all emotion at so accidental a rescue from starvation, that Pisistratus exclaims—

" I don't know why I should have taken this fancy to you, Mr. Dare-devil, if that be the name that pleases you best. The wood you are made of seems cross grained, and full of knots; and yet, in the hands of a skilful carver, I think it would be worth much."

STRANGER (startled).—" Do you ? do you ? None, I believe, ever thought that before. But the same wood, I suppose, that makes the gibbet, could make the mast of a man-of-war. I tell you, however, why you have taken this fancy to me—the strong sympathize with the strong. You, too, could subdue fortune ! "

PISISTRATUS.—" Stop; if so—if there is congeniality between us, then liking should

be reciprocal. Come, say that; for half my chance of helping you is in my power to touch your heart."

STRANGER (evidently softened).—"If I were as great a rogue as I ought to be, my answer would be easy enough. As it is, I delay it. Adieu.—On Thursday."

Stranger vanishes in the labyrinth of alleys round Leicester Square.

CHAPTER III.

ON my return to The Lamb, I found that my uncle was in a soft sleep; and after a morning visit from the surgeon, and his assurance that the fever was fast subsiding, and all cause for alarm was gone, I thought it necessary to go back to Trevanion's house, and explain the reason for my night's absence. But the family had not returned from the country. Trevanion himself came up for a few hours in the afternoon, and seemed to feel much for my poor uncle's illness. Though, as usual, very busy, he accompanied me to The Lamb, to see my father, and cheer him up. Roland still continued to mend, as the surgeon phrased it; and as we went back to St. James's Square, Trevanion had the consideration to release me from my oar in his galley for the next few days. My mind, relieved from my anxiety for Roland, now turned to my new friend. It had not been without an object that I had questioned the young man as to his knowledge of French. Trevanion had a large correspondence in foreign countries which was carried on in that language, and here I could be but of little help to him. He himself, though he spoke and wrote French with fluency and grammatical correctness, wanted that intimate knowledge of the most delicate and diplomatic of all languages to satisfy his classical purism. For Trevanion was a terrible *word-weigher*. His taste was the plague of my life and his own. His prepared speeches (or rather perorations) were the most finished pieces of cold diction that could be conceived under the marble portico of the Stoics,—so filed and turned, trimmed and tamed, that they never admitted a sentence that could warm the heart, or one that could offend the ear. He had so great a horror of a vulgarism that, like Canning, he would have made a periphrasis of a couple of lines to avoid using the word 'cat.' It was only in extempore speaking that a ray of his real genius could indiscreetly betray itself. One may judge what labor such a super-refinement of taste would inflict upon a man writing in a language not his own to some distinguished statesman, or some literary institution,—knowing that language just well enough to recognize all the native elegances he failed to attain. Trevanion, at that very moment, was employed upon a statistical document, intended as a communication to a Society at Copenhagen, of which he was an honorary member. It had been for three weeks the torment of the whole house, especially of poor Fanny (whose French was the best at our joint disposal). But Trevanion had found her phraseology too mincing, to effeminate, too much that of the *boudoir*. Here, then, was an opportunity to introduce my new friend, and test the capacities that I fancied he possessed. I therefore, though with some hesitation, led the subject to "Remarks on the Mineral Treasures of Great Britain and Ireland" (such was the title of the work intended to enlighten the *savans* of Denmark); and, by certain ingenious circumlocutions, known to all able applicants, I introduced my acquaintance with a young gentleman who possessed the most familiar and intimate knowledge of French, and who might be of use in revising the manuscript. I knew enough of Trevanion to fell that I could not reveal the circumstances under which I had formed that acquaintance, for he was much too practical a man not to have been frightened out of his wits at the idea of submitting so classical a performance to so disreputable a scape-grace. As it was, however, Trevanion, whose mind at that moment was full of a thousand other things, caught at my suggestion, with very little cross-questioning on the subject, and before he left London, consigned the manuscript to my charge.

"My friend is poor," said I, timidly.

"Oh! as to that," cried Trevanion, hastily, "if it be a matter of charity, I put my purse into your hands; but don't put my

manuscript in his! If it be a matter of business, it is another affair; and I must judge of his work before I can say how much it is worth—perhaps nothing!"

So ungracious was this excellent man in his very virtues!

"Nay," said I, "it is a matter of business, and so we will consider it."

"In that case," said Trevanion, concluding the matter, and buttoning his pockets, "if I dislike his work, *nothing;* if I like it, twenty guineas. Where are the evening papers?" and in another moment the member of Parliament had forgotten the statist, and was pishing and tutting over the *Globe* or the *Sun*.

On Thursday, my uncle was well enough to be moved into our house; and on the same evening, I went forth to keep my appointment with the stranger. The clock struck nine as we met. The palm of punctuality might be divided between us. He had profited by the interval, since our last meeting, to repair the more obvious deficiencies of his wardrobe; and though there was something still wild, dissolute, outlandish, about his whole appearance, yet in the elastic energy of his step, and the resolute assurance of his bearing, there was that which Nature gives to her own aristocracy,—for, as far as my observation goes, what has been called the "grand air" (and which is wholly distinct from the polish of manner, or the urbane grace of high breeding) is always accompanied, and perhaps produced, by two qualities—courage, and the desire of command. It is more common to a half-savage nature than to one wholly civilized. The Arab has it, so has the American Indian: and I suspect that it was more frequent among the knights and barons of the middle ages than it is among the polished gentlemen of the modern drawing-room.

We shook hands, and walked on a few moments in silence; at length thus commenced the STRANGER,—

"You have found it more difficult, I fear, than you imagined, to make the empty sack stand upright. Considering that at least one-third of those born to work cannot find it, why should I?"

PISISTRATUS.—"I am hard-hearted enough to believe that work never fails to those who seek it in good earnest. It was said of some man, famous for keeping his word, that 'if he had promised you an acorn, and all the oaks in England failed to produce one, he would have sent to Norway for an acorn.' If I wanted work, and there was none to be had in the Old World, I would find my way to the New. But, to the point: I *have* found something for you, which I do not think your taste will oppose, and which may open to you the means of an honorable independence. But I cannot well explain it in the streets: where shall we go?"

STRANGER (after some hesitation),—"I have a lodging near here, which I need not blush to take you to—I mean, that it is not among rogues and cast-aways."

PISISTRATUS (much pleased and taking the stranger's arm).—"Come, then."

Pisistratus and the stranger pass over Waterloo Bridge, and pause before a small house of respectable appearance. Stranger admits them both with a latch-key—leads the way to the third story, strikes a light, and does the honors to a small chamber, clean and orderly. Pisistratus explains the task to be done, and opens the manuscript. The stranger draws his chair deliberately towards the light, and runs his eye rapidly over the pages. Pisistratus trembles to see him pause before a long array of figures and calculations. Certainly it does not look inviting; but, pshaw! it is scarcely a part of the task, which limits itself to the mere correction of words.

STRANGER (briefly).—"There must be a mistake here—stay!—I see—" (He turns back a few pages, and corrects with rapid precision an error in a somewhat complicated and abstruse calculation.)

PISISTRATUS (surprised).—"You seem a notable arithmetician."

STRANGER.—"Did I not tell you that I was skilful in all games of mingled skill and chance? It requires an arithmetical head for that: a first-rate card-player is a financier spoilt. I am certain that you never could find a man fortunate on the turf, or at the gaming-table, who had not an excellent head for figures. Well, this French is good enough apparently; there are but a few idioms, here and there, that, strictly speaking, are more English than French. But the whole is a work scarce worth paying for!"

PISISTRATUS.—"The work of the head fetches a price not proportioned to the quantity, but the quality. When shall I call for this?"

STRANGER.—"To-morrow." (And he puts the manuscript away in a drawer.)

We then conversed on various matters for nearly an hour; and my impression of this young man's natural ability was confirmed and heightened. But it was an ability as wrong and perverse in its directions or instincts as a French novelist's. He seemed to have, to a high degree, the harder portion of the reasoning faculty, but to be almost wholly without that arch beautifier of character, that sweet purifier of mere intellect—*the imagination.* For, though we are too much taught to be on our guard against imagination, I hold it, with Captain Roland, to be the divinest kind of reason we possess, and the one that leads us the least astray. In youth, indeed, it occasions errors, but they are not of a sordid or debasing nature. Newton says that one final effect of the comets is to recruit the seas and the planets by a condensation of the vapors and exhalations therein; and so even the erratic flashes of an imagination really healthful and vigorous deepen our knowledge and brighten our lights; they recruit our seas and our stars. Of such flashes my new friend was as innocent as the sternest matter-of-fact person could desire. Fancies he had in profusion, and very bad ones; but of imagination not a *scintilla!*

His mind was one of those which live in a prison of logic, and cannot, or will not, see beyond the bars: such a nature is at once positive and sceptical. This boy had thought proper to decide at once on the numberless complexities of the social world from his own harsh experience. With him the whole system was a war and a cheat. If the universe were entirely composed of knaves, he would be sure to have made his way. Now this bias of mind, alike shrewd and unamiable, might be safe enough if accompanied by a lethargic temper; but it threatened to become terrible and dangerous in one who, in default of imagination, possessed abundance of passion: and this was the case with the young outcast. Passion, in him, comprehended many of the worst emotions which militate against human happiness. You could not contradict him, but you raised quick choler; you could not speak of wealth, but the cheek paled with gnawing envy. The astonishing natural advantages of this poor boy—his beauty, his readiness, the daring spirit that breathed around him like a fiery atmosphere—had raised his constitutional self-confidence into an arrogance that turned his very claims to admiration into prejudices against him. Irascible, envious, arrogant—bad enough, but not the worst, for these salient angles were all varnished over with a cold repellant cynicism—his passions vented themselves in sneers.

There seemed in him no moral susceptibility; and, what was more remarkable in a proud nature, little or nothing of the true point of honor. He had, to a morbid excess, that desire to rise which is vulgarly called ambition, but no apparent wish for fame, or esteem, or the love of his species; only the hard wish to succeed, not shine, not serve,—succeed, that he might have the right to despise a world which galled his self-conceit, and enjoy the pleasures which the redundant nervous life in him seemed to crave. Such were the more patient attributes of a character that, ominous as it was, yet interested me, and yet appeared to me to be redeemable,—nay, to have in it the rude elements of a certain greatness. Ought we not to make something great out of a youth under twenty, who has, in the highest degree, quickness to conceive and courage to execute? On the other hand, all faculties that can make greatness contain those that can attain goodness. In the savage Scandinavian, or the ruthless Frank, lay the germs of a Sidney or a Bayard. What would the best of us be, if he were suddenly placed at war with the whole world? And this fierce spirit *was* at war with the whole world—a war self-sought, perhaps, but it was war not the less. You must surround the savage with peace, if you want the virtues of peace.

I cannot say that it was in a single interview and conference that I came to these convictions; but I am rather summing up the impressions which I received as I saw more of this person, whose destiny I presumed to take under my charge.

In going away, I said, "But, at all events,

you have a name in your lodgings: whom am I to ask for when I call to-morrow?"

"Oh, you may know my name now," said he, smiling: "it is Vivian—Francis Vivian."

CHAPTER IV.

I REMEMBER one morning, when a boy, loitering by an old wall, to watch the operations of a garden spider, whose web seemed to be in great request. When I first stopped, she was engaged very quietly with a fly of the domestic species, whom she managed with ease and dignity. But just when she was most interested in that absorbing employment, came a couple of May-flies, and then a gnat, and then a blue-bottle,—all at different angles of the web. Never was a poor spider so distracted by her good fortune! She evidently did not know which godsend to take first. The aboriginal victim being released, she slid half-way towards the May-flies; then one of her eight eyes caught sight of the blue-bottle! and she shot off in that direction:—when the hum of the gnat again diverted her; and in the middle of this perplexity, pounce came a young wasp in a violent passion! Then the spider evidently lost her presence of mind: she became clean demented; and after standing, stupid and stock-still, in the middle of her meshes, for a minute or two, she ran off to her hole as fast as she could run, and left her guests to shift for themselves.

I confess that I am somewhat in the dilemma of the attractive and amiable insect I have just described. I got on well enough while I had only my domestic fly to see after. But now that there is something fluttering at every end of my net, (and especially since the advent of that passionate young wasp, who is fuming and buzzing in the nearest corner!) I am fairly at a loss which I should first grapple with—and, alas! unlike the spider, I have no hole where I can hide myself, and let the web do the weaver's work. But I will imitate the spider as far as I can; and while the rest hum and struggle away their impatient, unnoticed hour, I will retreat into the inner labyrinth of my own life.

The illness of my uncle, and my renewed acquaintance with Vivian, had naturally sufficed to draw my thoughts from the rash and unpropitious love I had conceived for Fanny Trevanion. During the absence of the family from London (and they stayed some time longer than had been expected), I had leisure, however, to recall my father's touching history, and the moral it had so obviously preached to me; and I formed so many good resolutions, that it was with an untrembling hand that I welcomed Miss Trevanion at last to London, and with a firm heart that I avoided, as much as possible, the fatal charm of her society. The slow convalescence of my uncle gave me a just excuse to discontinue our rides. What time Trevanion spared me, it was natural that I should spend with my family. I went to no balls nor parties. I even absented myself from Trevanion's periodical dinners.

Miss Trevanion at first rallied me on my seclusion, with her usual lively malice. But I continued worthily to complete my martyrdom. I took care that no reproachful look at the gaiety that wrung my soul should betray my secret. Then Fanny seemed either hurt or disdainful, and avoided altogether entering her father's study; all at once, she changed her tactics, and was seized with a strange desire for knowledge, which brought her into the room to look for a book, or ask a question, ten times a-day. I was proof to all. But, to speak truth, I was profoundly wretched. Looking back now, I am dismayed at the remembrance of my own sufferings; my health became seriously affected; I dreaded alike the trial of the day and the anguish of the night. My only distractions were in my visits to Vivian, and my escape to the dear circle of home. And that home was my safeguard and preservative in that crisis of my life: its atmosphere of unpretending honor and serene virtue strengthened all my resolutions; it braced me for my struggles against the strongest passion which youth admits, and counteracted the evil vapors of that air in which Vivian's envenomed spirit breathed and moved. Without the influence of such a home, if I had succeeded in the conduct that probity enjoined towards those in whose house I was a trusted guest, I do not think I

could have resisted the contagion of that malign and morbid bitterness against fate and the world, which love, thwarted by fortune, is too inclined of itself to conceive, and in the expression of which Vivian was not without the eloquence that belongs to earnestness, whether in truth or falsehood. But, somehow or other, I never left the little room that contained the grand suffering in the face of the veteran soldier, whose lip, often quivering with anguish, was never heard to murmur; and the tranquil wisdom which had succeeded my father's early trials (trials like my own), and the loving smile on my mother's tender face, and the innocent childhood of Blanche (by which name the Elf had familiarized herself to us), whom I already loved as a sister,—without feeling that those four walls contained enough to sweeten the world, had it been filled to its capacious brim with gall and hyssop.

Trevanion had been more than satisfied with Vivian's performance—he had been struck with it. For though the corrections in the mere phraseology had been very limited, they went beyond verbal amendment:—they suggested such words as improved the thoughts; and, besides that notable correction of an arithmetical error, which Trevanion's mind was formed to over-appreciate, one or two brief annotations on the margin were boldly hazarded, prompting some stronger link in a chain of reasoning, or indicating the necessity for some further evidence in the assertion of a statement. And all this from the mere natural and naked logic of an acute mind, unaided by the smallest knowledge of the subject treated of! Trevanion threw quite enough work into Vivian's hands, and at a remuneration sufficiently liberal to realize my promise of an independence. And more than once he asked me to introduce to him my friend. But this I continued to elude—heaven knows, not from jealousy, but simply because I feared that Vivian's manner and way of talk would singularly displease one who detested presumption, and understood no eccentricities but his own.

Still Vivian, whose industry was of a strong wing, but only for short flights, had not enough to employ more than a few hours of his day, and I dreaded lest he should, from very idleness, fall back into old habits, and re-seek old friendships. His cynical candor allowed that both were sufficiently disreputable to justify grave apprehensions of such a result; accordingly, I contrived to find leisure in my evenings to lessen his *ennui*, by accompanying him in rambles through the gas-lit streets, or occasionally, for an hour or so, to one of the theatres.

Vivian's first care, on finding himself rich enough, had been bestowed on his person; and those two faculties of observation and imitation which minds so ready always eminently possess, had enabled him to achieve that graceful neatness of costume peculiar to the English gentleman. For the first few days of his metamorphosis, traces indeed of a constitutional love of show, or vulgar companionship, were noticeable; but one by one they disappeared. First went a gaudy neckcloth, with collars turned down; then a pair of spurs vanished; and lastly, a diabolical instrument that he called a cane—but which, by means of a running bullet, could serve as a bludgeon at one end, and concealed a dagger in the other—subsided into the ordinary walking-stick adapted to our peaceable metropolis. A similar change, though in a less degree, gradually took place in his manner and his conversation. He grew less abrupt in the one, and more calm, perhaps more cheerful, in the other. It was evident that he was not insensible to the elevated pleasure of providing for himself by praiseworthy exertion—of feeling for the first time that his intellect was of use to him, *creditably*. A new world, though still dim—seen through mist and fog—began to dawn upon him.

Such is the vanity of us poor mortals, that my interest in Vivian was probably increased, and my aversion to much in him materially softened, by observing that I had gained a sort of ascendancy over his savage nature. When we had first met by the roadside, and afterwards conversed in the churchyard, the ascendancy was certainly not on my side. But I now came from a larger sphere of society than that in which he had yet moved. I had seen and listened to the first men in England. What had then dazzled me only, now moved my pity. On the other hand, his active mind could not but observe the change in me; and, whether from envy or a better feeling, he was willing to learn from me how to eclipse me, and resume his earlier superiority—not to be superior chafed him. Thus he listened to me with docility when I pointed out the books which

connected themselves with the various subjects incidental to the miscellaneous matters on which he was employed. Though he had less of the literary turn of mind than any one equally clever I had ever met, and had read little, considering the quantity of thought he had acquired, and the show he made of the few works with which he had voluntarily made himself familiar, he yet resolutely sate himself down to study; and though it was clearly against the grain, I augured the more favorably from tokens of a determination to do what was at the present irksome for a purpose in the future. Yet, whether I should have approved the purpose—had I thoroughly understood it—is another question! There were abysses, both in his past life and in his character, which I could not penetrate. There was in him both a reckless frankness and a vigilant reserve: his frankness was apparent in his talk on all matters immedially before us; in the utter absence of all effort to make himself seem better than he was. His reserve was equally shown in the ingenious evasion of every species of confidence that could admit me into such secrets of his life as he chose to conceal: where he had been born, reared, and educated; how he came to be thrown on his own resources; how he had contrived, how he had subsisted, were all matters on which he had seemed to take an oath to Harpocrates, the god of silence. And yet he was full of ancedotes of what he had seen, of strange companions, whom he never named, but with whom he had been thrown. And, to do him justice, I remarked that, though his precocious experience seemed to have been gathered from the holes and corners, the sewers and drains of life, and though he seemed wholly without dislike to dishonesty, and to regard virtue or vice with as serene an indifference as some grand poet who views them both merely as ministrants to his art, yet he never betrayed any positive breach of honesty in himself. He could laugh over the story of some ingenious fraud that he had witnessed, and seem insensible to its turpitude; but he spoke of it in the tone of an approving witness, not of an actual accomplice. As we grew more intimate, he felt gradually, however, that *pudor*, or instinctive shame, which the contact with minds habituated to the distinctions between wrong and right, unconsciously produces, and such stories ceased. He never but once mentioned his family, and that was in the following odd and abrupt manner:—

"Ah!" cried he one day, stopping suddenly before a print-shop, "how that reminds me of my dear, dear mother."

"Which?" said I eagerly, puzzled between an engraving of Raffaelle's "Madonna," and another of "The Brigand's Wife."

Vivian did not satisfy my curiosity, but drew me on in spite of my reluctance.

"You loved your mother, then?" said I, after a pause.

"Yes, as a whelp may a tigress."

"That's a strange comparison."

"Or a bull-dog may the prize-fighter, his master! Do you like that better?"

"Not much; is it a comparison your mother would like?"

"Like?—she is dead!" said he, rather falteringly.

I pressed his arm closer to mine.

"I understand you," said he, with his cynic repellant smile. "But you do wrong to fell for my loss. I feel for it; but no one who cares for me should sympathize with my grief."

"Why?"

"Because my mother was not what the world would call a good woman. I did not love her the less for that. And now let us change the subject."

"Nay; since you have said so much, Vivian, let me coax you to say on. Is not your father living?"

"Is not the Monument standing?"

"I suppose so; what of that?"

"Why, it matters very little to either of us; and my question answers yours!"

I could not get on after this, and I never did get on a step farther. I must own that if Vivian did not impart his confidence liberally, neither did he seek confidence inquisitively from me. He listened with interest if I spoke of Trevanion (for I told him frankly of my connection with that personage, though you may be sure that I said nothing of Fanny), and of the brilliant world that my residence with one so distinguished opened to me. But if ever, in the fulness of my heart, I began to speak of my parents, of my home, he evinced either so impertinent an *ennui*, or assumed so chilling a sneer, that I usually hurried away

from him, as well as the subject, in indignant disgust. Once especially, when I asked him to let me introduce him to my father—a point on which I was really anxious, for I thought it impossible but that the devil within him would be softened by that contact—he said, with his low, scornful laugh—

"My dear Caxton, when I was a child, I was so bored with 'Telemachus,' that, in order to endure it, I turned it into travesty."

"Well?"

"Are you not afraid that the same wicked disposition might make a caricature of your Ulysses?"

I did not see Mr. Vivian for three days after that speech; and I should not have seen him then, only we met, by accident, under the Colonnade of the Opera-House. Vivian was leaning against one of the columns, and watching the long procession which swept to the only temple in vogue that Art has retained in the English Babel. Coaches and chariots, blazoned with arms and coronets—cabriolets (the brougham had not then replaced them) of sober hue, but exquisite appointment, with gigantic horses and pigmy "tigers," dashed on, and rolled off before him. Fair women and gay dresses, stars and ribbons—the rank and the beauty of the patrician world—passed him by. And I could not resist the compassion with which this lonely, friendless, eager, discontented spirit inspired me—gazing on that gorgeous existence in which it fancied itself formed to shine, with the ardor of desire and the despair of exclusion. By one glimpse of that dark countenance, I read what was passing within the yet darker heart. The emotion might not be amiable, nor the thoughts wise, yet, were they unnatural? I had experienced something of them—not at the sight of gay-dressed people, of wealth and idleness, pleasure and fashion; but when, at the doors of Parliament, men who have won noble names, and whose word had weight on the destinies of glorious England, brushed heedlessly by to their grand arena; or when amidst the holiday crowd of ignoble pomp I had heard the murmur of fame buzz and gather round some lordly laborer in art or letters. That contrast between glory so near, and yet so far, and one's own obscurity, of course I had felt it—who has not? Alas! many a youth not fated to be a Themistocles, will yet feel that the trophies of a Miltiades will not suffer him to sleep! So I went up to Vivian and laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Ah!" said he, more gently than usual, "I am glad to see you—and to apologize—I offended you the other day. But you would not get very gracious answers from souls in purgatory, if you talked to them of the happiness of heaven. Never speak to me about homes and fathers! Enough, I see you forgive me. Why are you not going to the opera? *You* can?"

"And you too, if you so please. A ticket is shamefully dear, to be sure; still, if you are fond of music, it is a luxury you can afford."

"Oh, you flatter me if you fancy the prudence of saving withholds me! I did go the other night, but I shall not go again. Music! —when you go to the opera, is it for the music?"

"Only partially, I own: the lights, the scene, the pageant, attract me quite as much. But I do not think the opera a very profitable pleasure for either of us. For rich idle people, I dare say, it may be as innocent an amusement as any other, but I find it a sad enervator."

"And I just the reverse—a horrible stimulant! Caxton, do you know that, ungracious as it will sound to you, I am growing impatient of this 'honorable independence!' What does it lead to?—board, clothes, and lodging,—can it ever bring me anything more?"

"At first, Vivian, you limited your aspirations to kid gloves and a cabriolet: it has brought the kid gloves already; by and by it will bring the cabriolet!"

"Our wishes grow by what they feed on. You live in the great world—you can have excitement if you please it—I want excitement, I want the world, I want room for my mind, man! Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly—and sympathize with you, my poor Vivian; but it will all come. Patience, as I preached to you while dawn rose so comfortless over the streets of London. You are not losing time; fill your mind; read, study, fit yourself for ambition. Why wish to fly till you have got your wings? Live in books now: after all, they are splendid palaces, and open to us all, rich and poor."

"Books, books!—ah, you are the son of a bookman! It is not by books that men get on in the world, and enjoy life in the meanwhile."

"I don't know that; but, my good fellow

you want to do both—get on in the world as fast as labor can, and enjoy life as pleasantly as indolence may. You want to live like the butterfly, and yet have all the honey of the bee; and, what is the very deuce of the whole, even as the butterfly, you ask every flower to grow up in a moment; and, as a bee, the whole hive must be stored in a quarter of an hour! Patience, patience, patience."

Vivian sighed a fierce sigh. "I suppose," said he, after an unquiet pause, "that the vagrant and the outlaw are strong in me, for I long to run back to my old existence, which was all action, and therefore allowed no thought."

While he thus said, we had wandered round the Colonnade, and were in that narrow passage in which is situated the more private entrance to the opera: close by the doors of that entrance, two or three young men were lounging. As Vivian ceased, the voice of one of these loungers came laughingly to our ears.

"Oh!" it said, apparently in answer to some question, "I have a much quicker way to fortune than that; I mean to marry an heiress?"

Vivian started, and looked at the speaker. He was a very good-looking fellow. Vivian continued to look at him, and deliberately, from head to foot; he then turned away with a satisfied and thoughtful smile.

"Certainly," said I, gravely (construing the smile), "you are right there; you are even better-looking than that heiress-hunter!"

Vivian colored; but before he could answer, one of the loungers, as the group recovered from the gay laugh which their companion's easy coxcombry had excited, said,—

"Then, by the way, if you want an heiress, here comes one of the greatest in England; but instead of being a younger son, with three good lives between you and an Irish peerage, one ought to be an earl at least to aspire to Fanny Trevanion!"

The name thrilled through me—I felt myself tremble—and, looking up, I saw Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion, as they hurried from their carriage towards the entrance of the opera. They both recognized me, and Fanny cried,—

"You here! How fortunate! You must see us into the box, even if you run away the moment after."

"But I am not dressed for the opera," said I, embarrassed.

"And why not?" asked Miss Trevanion; then, dropping her voice, she added, "Why do you desert us so wilfully?"—and, leaning her hand on my arm, I was drawn irresistibly into the lobby. The young loungers at the door made way for us, and eyed me, no doubt, with envy.

"Nay!" said I, affecting to laugh, as I saw Miss Trevanion waited for my reply. "You forget how little time I have for such amusements now,—and my uncle——"

"Oh, but mamma and I have been to see your uncle to-day, and he is nearly well—is he not, mamma? I cannot tell you how I like and admire him. He is just what I fancy a Douglas of the old day. But mamma is impatient. Well, you must dine with us to-morrow—promise!—not *adieu* but *au revoir*," and Fanny glided to her mother's arm. Lady Ellinor, always kind and courteous to me, had good-naturedly lingered till this dialogue, or rather monologue, was over.

On returning to the passage, I found Vivian walking to and fro; he had lighted his cigar, and was smoking energetically.

"So this great heiress," said he, smiling, "who, as far as I could see—under her hood—seems no less fair than rich, is the daughter, I presume, of the Mr. Trevanion whose effusions you so kindly submit to me. He is very rich, then? You never said so, yet I ought to have known it: but you see I know nothing of your *beau monde*—not even that Miss Trevanion is one of the greatest heiresses in England."

"Yes, Mr. Trevanion is rich," said I, repressing a sigh—"very rich."

"And you are his secretary! My dear friend, you may well offer me patience, for a large stock of yours will, I hope, be superfluous to you."

"I don't understand you."

"Yet you heard that young gentleman, as well as myself; and you are in the same house as the heiress."

"Vivian!"

"Well, what have I said so monstrous?"

"Pooh! since you refer to that young gentleman, you heard, too, what his companion told him,—'one ought to be an earl, at least, to aspire to Fanny Trevanion!'"

"Tut! as well say that one ought to be a *millionaire* to aspire to a million!—yet I believe those who make millions generally begin with pence."

"That belief should be a comfort and encouragement to you, Vivian. And, now, good-night,—I have much to do."

"Good-night, then," said Vivian, and we parted.

I made my way to Mr. Trevanion's house, and to the study. There was a formidable arrear of business waiting for me, and I sate down to it at first resolutely; but, by degrees, I found my thoughts wandering from the eternal blue-books, and the pen slipped from my hand, in the midst of an extract from a Report on Sierra Leone. My pulse beat loud and quick; I was in that state of nervous fever which only emotion can occasion. The sweet voice of Fanny rang in my ears; her eyes, as I had last met them, unusually gentle—almost beseeching—gazed upon me wherever I turned: and then, as in mockery, I heard again those words,—"One ought to be an earl, at least, to aspire to"—Oh! did I aspire? Was I vain fool so frantic?—household traitor so consummate? No, no! Then what did I under the same roof?—why stay to imbibe this sweet poison, that was corroding the very springs of my life? At that self-question, which, had I been but a year or two older, I should have asked long before, a mortal terror seized me; the blood rushed from my heart, and left me cold—icy cold. To leave the house! leave Fanny!—never again to see those eyes—never to hear that voice!—better die of the sweet poison than of the desolate exile! I rose—I opened the windows—I walked to and fro the room: I could decide nothing—think of nothing; all my mind was in an uproar. With a violent effort at self-mastery, I approached the table again. I resolved to force myself to my task, if it were only to re-collect my faculties, and enable them to bear my own torture. I turned over the books impatiently, when, lo! buried amongst them, what met my eye—archly, yet reproachfully—the face of Fanny herself! Her miniature was there. It had been, I knew, taken a few days before, by a young artist whom Trevanion patronized. I suppose he had carried it into his study to examine it, and so left it there carelessly. The painter had seized her peculiar expression—her ineffable smile—so charming, so malicious; even her favorite posture—the small head turned over the rounded Hebe-like shoulder—the eye glancing up from under the hair. I know not what change in my madness came over me; but I sank on my knees, and, kissing the miniature again and again, burst into tears. Such tears! I did not hear the door open—I did not see the shadow steal over the floor: a light hand rested on my shoulder, trembling as it rested—I started. Fanny herself was bending over me!

"What is the matter?" she asked, tenderly. "What has happened?—your uncle—your family—all well? Why are you weeping?"

I could not answer; but I kept my hands clasped over the miniature, that she might not see what they contained.

"Will you not answer? Am I not your friend?—almost your sister? Come, shall I call mamma?"

"Yes—yes; go—go."

"No, I will not go yet. What have you there?—what are you hiding?"

And innocently, and sister-like, those hands took mine; and so—and so—the picture became visible! There was a dead silence. I looked up through my tears. Fanny had recoiled some steps, and her cheek was very flushed, her eyes downcast. I felt as if I had committed a crime—as if dishonor clung to me; and yet I repressed—yes, thank Heaven! I repressed the cry that swelled from my heart, that rushed to my lips—"Pity me, for I love you!" I repressed it, and only a groan escaped me—the wail of my lost happiness! Then, rising, I laid the miniature on the table, and said, in a voice that I believe was firm—

"Miss Trevanion, you *have* been as kind as a sister to me, and therefore I was bidding a brother's farewell to your likeness; it *is* so like you—this!"

"Farewell!" echoed Fanny, still not looking up.

"Farewell—*sister!* There, I have boldly said the word; for—for"—I hurried to the door, and, there turning, added, with what I meant to be a smile—"for they say at home that I—I am not well; too much for me this; you know mothers will be foolish; and—and—I am to speak to your father to-morrow; and—good-night—God bless you, Miss Trevanion!"

PART NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

And my father pushed aside his books.

O young reader, whoever thou art,—or reader, at least, who hast been young,—canst thou not remember some time when, with thy wild troubles and sorrows as yet borne in secret, thou hast come back from that hard, stern world which opens on thee when thou puttest thy foot out of the threshold of home—come back to the four quiet walls, wherein thine elders sit in peace—and seen, with a sort of sad amaze, how calm and undisturbed all is there? That generation which has gone before thee in the path of the passions—the generation of thy parents—(not so many years, perchance, remote from thine own)—how immovably far off, in its still repose, it seems from thy turbulent youth! It has in it a stillness as of a classic age, antique as the statues of the Greeks. That tranquil monotony of routine into which those lives that preceded thee have merged—the occupations that they have found sufficing for their happiness, by the fireside,—in the arm-chair and corner appropriated to each—how strangely they contrast thine own feverish excitement! And they make room for thee, and bid thee welcome, and then resettle to their hushed pursuits, as if nothing had happened! Nothing had happened! while in thy heart, perhaps, the whole world seems to have shot from its axis, all the elements to be at war! And you sit down, crushed by that quiet happiness which you can share no more, and smile mechanically, and look into the fire; and, ten to one, you say nothing till the time comes for bed, and you take up your candle, and creep miserably to your lonely room.

Now, if in a stage-coach in the depth of winter, when three passengers are warm and snug, a fourth, all besnowed and frozen, descends from the outside and takes place amongst them, straightway all the three passengers shift their places, uneasily pull up their cloak collars, rearrange their "comforters," feel indignantly a sensible loss of caloric—the intruder has at least made a sensation. But if you had all the snows of the Grampians in your heart, you might enter unnoticed; take care not to tread on the toes of your opposite neighbor, and not a soul is disturbed, not a "comforter" stirs an inch! I had not slept a wink, I had not even laid down all that night—the night in which I had said farewell to Fanny Trevanion—and the next morning, when the sun rose, I wandered out—where I know not. I have a dim recollection of long, gray, solitary streets—of the river that seemed flowing in dull, sullen silence, away, far away, into some invisible eternity—trees and turf, and the gay voices of children. I must have gone from one end of the great Babel to the other: but my memory only became clear and distinct when I knocked, somewhere before noon, at the door of my father's house, and, passing heavily up the stairs, came into the drawing-room, which was the rendezvous of the little family; for, since we had been in London, my father had ceased to have his study apart, and contented himself with what he called "a corner"—a corner wide enough to contain two tables and a dumb waiter with chairs *à discrétion* all littered with books. On the opposite side of this capacious corner sat my uncle, now nearly convalescent, and he was jotting down, in his stiff, military hand, certain figures in a little red account-book—for you know already that my uncle Roland was, in his expenses, the most methodical of men.

My father's face was more benign than usual, for before him lay a proof—the first proof of his first work—his one work—the Great Book! Yes! it had positively found a press. And the

first proof of your first work—ask any author what *that* is! My mother was out, with the faithful Mrs. Primmins, shopping or marketing, no doubt; so, while the brothers were thus engaged, it was natural that my entrance should not make as much noise as if it had been a bomb, or a singer, or a clap of thunder, or the last "great novel of the season," or anything else that made a noise in those days. For what makes a noise now? Now, when the most astonishing thing of all is our easy familiarity with things astounding—when we say, listlessly, "Another revolution at Paris," or, "By the by, there is the deuce to do at Vienna!"—when De Joinville is catching fish in the ponds at Claremont, and you hardly turn back to look at Metternich on the pier at Brighton!

My uncle nodded and growled indistinctly; my father—

"Put aside his books; you have told us that already."

Sir, you are very much mistaken; it was not then that he put aside his books, for he was not then engaged in them—he was reading his proof. And he smiled, and pointed to it (the proof I mean) pathetically, and with a kind of humor, as much as to say—"what can you expect, Pisistratus?—my new baby in short clothes—or long primer, which is all the same thing!"

I took a chair between the two, and looked first at one, then at the other—heaven forgive me!—I felt a rebellious, ungrateful spite against both. The bitterness of my soul must have been deep indeed to have overflowed in that direction, but it did. The grief of youth is an abominable egotist, and that is the truth. I got up from the chair, and walked towards the window; it was open, and outside the window was Mrs. Primmins' canary, in its cage. London air had agreed with it, and it was singing lustily. Now, when the canary saw me standing opposite to its cage, and regarding it seriously, and, I have no doubt, with a very sombre aspect, the creature stopped short, and hung its head on one side, looking at me obliquely and suspiciously. Finding that I did it no harm, it began to hazard a few broken notes, timidly and interrogatively, as it were, pausing between each; and at length, as I made no reply, it evidently thought it had solved the doubt, and ascertained that I was more to be pitied than feared—for it stole gradually into so soft and silvery a strain that, I verily believe, it did it on purpose to comfort me!—me, its old friend, whom it had unjustly suspected. Never did any music touch me so home as did that long, plaintive cadence. And when the bird ceased, it perched itself close to the bars of the cage, and looked at me steadily with his bright intelligent eyes. I felt mine water, and I turned back and stood in the centre of the room, irresolute what to do, where to go. My father had done with the proof, and was deep in his folios. Roland had clasped his red account-book, restored it to his pocket, wiped his pen carefully, and now watched me from under his great beetle-brows. Suddenly he rose, and, stamping on the hearth with his cork-leg, exclaimed, "Look up from those cursed books, brother Austin! What is there in your son's face? Construe *that*, if you can!"

CHAPTER II.

And my father pushed aside his books, and rose hastily. He took off his spectacles, and rubbed them mechanically, but he said nothing; and my uncle, staring at him for a moment, in surprise at his silence, burst out—

"Oh! I see; he has been getting into some scrape, and you are angry. Fie! young blood will have its way, Austin—it will. I don't blame that—it is only when—come here, Sisty. Zounds! man, come here."

My father gently brushed off the Captain's hand, and, advancing towards me, opened his arms. The next moment I was sobbing on his breast.

"But what is the matter?" cried Captain Roland—"will nobody say what is the matter? Money, I suppose—money, you confounded extravagant young dog. Luckily you have got an uncle who has more than he knows what to do with. How much? Fifty?—a hundred?—two hundred? How can I write the check, if you'll not speak."

"Hush, brother! it is no money you can give that will set this right. My poor boy! Have I guessed truly? Did I guess truly the other evening, when——"

"Yes, sir, yes! I have been so wretched. But I am better now—I can tell you all."

My uncle moved slowly towards the door: his fine sense of delicacy made him think that even he was out of place in the confidence between son and father.

"No, uncle," I said, holding out my hand to him, "stay; you too can advise me—strengthen me. I have kept my honor yet—help me to keep it still."

At the sound of the word honor, Captain Roland stood mute, and raised his head quickly.

So I told all—incoherently enough at first, but clearly and manfully as I went on. Now I know that it is not the custom of lovers to confide in fathers and uncles. Judging by those mirrors of life, plays and novels, they choose better;—valets and chamber-maids, and friends whom they have picked up in the street, as I had picked up poor Francis Vivian—to these they make clean breasts of their troubles. But fathers and uncles—to them they are close, impregnable, "buttoned to the chin." The Caxtons were an eccentric family, and never did anything like other people. When I had ended, I lifted up my eyes, and said pleadingly, "Now, tell me, is there no hope—none?"

"Why should there be none?" cried Captain Roland hastily—"The De Caxtons are as good a family as the Trevanions; and as for yourself, all I will say is, that the young lady might choose worse for her own happiness."

I wrung my uncle's hand, and turned to my father in anxious fear—for I knew that, in spite of his secluded habits, few men ever formed a sounder judgment on worldly matters, when he was fairly drawn to look at them. A thing wonderful is that plain wisdom which scholars and poets often have for others, though they rarely deign to use it for themselves. And how on earth do they get at it? I looked at my father, and the vague hope Roland had excited fell as I looked.

"Brother," said he, slowly, and shaking his head, "the world, which gives codes and laws to those who live in it, does not care much for a pedigree, unless it goes with a title-deed to estates."

"Trevanion was not richer than Pisistratus when he married Lady Ellinor," said my uncle.

"True; but Lady Ellinor was not then an heiress, and her father viewed these matters as no other peer in England perhaps would. As for Trevanion himself, I dare say he has no prejudices about station, but he is strong in common sense. He values himself on being a practical man. It would be folly to talk to him of love, and the affections of youth. He would see in the son of Austin Caxton, living on the interest of some fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds, such a match for his daughter as no prudent man in his position could approve. And as for Lady Ellinor"—

"She owes us much, Austin!" exclaimed Roland, his face darkening.

"Lady Ellinor is now what, if we had known her better, she promised always to be—the ambitious, brilliant, scheming woman of the world. Is it not so, Pisistratus?"

I said nothing, I felt too much.

"And does the girl like you?—but I think it is clear she does!" exclaimed Roland. "Fate—fate; it has been a fatal family to us! Zounds! Austin, it was your fault. Why did you let him go there?"

"My son is now a man—at least in heart, if not in years—can man be shut from danger and trial? They found me in the old parsonage, brother!" said my father, mildly.

My uncle walked, or rather stumped, three times up and down the room; and he then stopped short, folded his arms, and came to a decision—

"If the girl likes you, your duty is doubly clear—you can't take advantage of it. You have done right to leave the house, for the temptation might be too strong."

"But what excuse shall I make to Mr. Trevanion?" said I, feebly—"what story can I invent? So careless as he is while he trusts, so penetrating if he once suspects, he will see through all my subterfuges, and—and——"

"It is as plain as a pike-staff," said my uncle, abruptly—"and there need be no subterfuge in the matter. 'I must leave you, Mr. Trevanion.' 'Why?' says he. 'Don't ask me.' He insists. 'Well then, sir, if you must know, I love your daughter. I have nothing—she is a great heiress. You will not approve of that love, and therefore I leave you!' That is the course that becomes an English gentleman. Eh, Austin?"

"You are never wrong when your instincts speak, Roland," said my father. "Can you say this, Pisistratus, or shall I say it for you?"

"Let him say it himself," said Roland; "and let him judge himself of the answer. He is young, he is clever, he may make a

figure in the world. Trevanion *may* answer, 'Win the lady after you have won the laurel, like the knights of old.' At all events, you will hear the worst."

"I will go," said I, firmly; and I took my hat and left the room. As I was passing the landing-place, a light step stole down the upper flight of stairs, and a little hand seized my own. I turned quickly, and met the full, dark, seriously sweet eyes of my cousin Blanche.

"Don't go away yet, Sisty," said she, coaxingly. "I have been waiting for you, for I heard your voice, and did not like to come in and disturb you."

"And why did you wait for me, my little Blanche?"

"Why! only to see you. But your eyes are red. Oh, cousin!"—and, before I was aware of her childish impulse, she had sprung to my neck and kissed me. Now Blanche was not like most children, and was very sparing of her caresses. So it was out of the deeps of a kind heart that that kiss came. I returned it without a word; and, putting her down gently, descended the stairs, and was in the streets. But I had not got far before I heard my father's voice; and he came up, and hooking his arm into mine, said, "Are there not two of us that suffer?—let us be together!" I pressed his arm, and we walked on in silence. But when we were near Trevanion's house, I said hesitatingly, "Would it not be better, sir, that I went in alone. If there is to be an explanation between Mr. Trevanion and myself, would it not seem as if your presence implied either a request to him that would lower us both, or a doubt of me that—"

"You will go in alone, of course: I will wait for you—"

"Not in the streets—oh, no! father," cried I, touched inexpressibly. For all this was so unlike my father's habits, that I felt remorse to have so communicated my young griefs to the calm dignity of his serene life.

"My son, you do not know how I love you. I have only known it myself lately. Look you, I am living in you now, my first-born; not in my other son—the Great Book: I must have my way. Go in; that is the door, is it not?"

I pressed my father's hand, and I felt then, that while that hand could reply to mine, even the loss of Fanny Trevanion could not leave the world a blank. How much we have before us in life, while we retain our parents! How much to strive and to hope for! What a motive in the conquest of our sorrow—that they may not sorrow with us!

CHAPTER III.

I ENTERED Trevanion's study. It was an hour in which he was rarely at home, but I had not thought of that; and I saw without surprise that, contrary to his custom, he was in his arm-chair, reading one of his favorite classic authors, instead of being in some committee-room of the House of Commons.

"A pretty fellow you are," said he, looking up, "to leave me all the morning, without rhyme or reason! And my committee is postponed—chairman ill; people who get ill should not go into the House of Commons. So here I am looking into Propertius: Parr is right; not so elegant a writer as Tibullus. But what the deuce are you about?—why don't you sit down? Humph! you look grave—you have something to say,—say it!"

And, putting down Propertius, the acute, sharp face of Trevanion instantly became earnest and attentive.

"My dear Mr. Trevanion," said I, with as much steadiness as I could assume, "you have been most kind to me; and out of my own family there is no man I love and respect more."

TREVANION.—Humph! What's all this? (In an under tone)—Am I going to be taken in?

PISISTRATUS.—Do not think me ungrateful, then, when I say I come to resign my office—to leave the house where I have been so happy.

TREVANION.—Leave the house! Pooh! I have overtasked you. I will be more merciful in future. You must forgive a political economist; it is the fault of my sect to look upon men as machines.

PISISTRATUS (smiling faintly).—No, indeed; that is not it! I have nothing to complain of; nothing I could wish altered—could I stay.

TREVANION (examining me thoughtfully).—And does your father approve of your leaving me thus?

PISISTRATUS.—Yes—fully.

TREVANION (musing a moment). I see, he would send you to the University, make you a

book-worm like himself: pooh! that will not do—you will never become wholly a man of books—it is not in you. Young man, though I may seem careless, I read characters, when I please it, pretty quickly. You do wrong to leave me; you are made for the great world—I can open to you a high career. I wish to do so! Lady Ellinor wishes it—nay, insists on it—for your father's sake as well as yours. I never ask a favor from ministers, and I never will. But (here Trevanion rose suddenly, and, with an erect mien and a quick gesture of his arm, he added)—but a minister can dispose as he pleases of his patronage. Look you, it is a secret yet, and I trust to your honor. But, before the year is out, I must be in the cabinet. Stay with me, I guarantee your fortunes—three months ago I would not have said that. By and by I will open Parliament for you—you are not of age yet—work till then. And now sit down and write my letters—a sad arrear!

"My dear, dear Mr. Trevanion!" said I, so affected that I could scarcely speak, and seizing his hand, which I pressed between both mine—"I dare not thank you—I cannot! But you don't know my heart—it is not ambition. No! if I could but stay here on the same terms for ever—*here*"—looking ruefully on that spot where Fanny had stood the night before. "But it is impossible!—if you knew all, you would be the first to bid me go!"

"You are in debt," said the man of the world, coldly. "Bad, very bad—still—"

"No, sir; no! worse"—

"Hardly possible to be worse, young man—hardly! But, just as you will; you leave me, and will not say why. Good-by. Why do you linger? Shake hands, and go!"

"I cannot leave you thus: I—I—sir, the truth shall out. I am rash and mad enough not to see Miss Trevanion without forgetting that I am poor, and"—

"Ha!" interrupted Trevanion softly, and growing pale, "this is a misfortune, indeed! And I, who talked of reading characters! Truly, truly, we would-be practical men are fools—fools! And you have made love to my daughter!"

"Sir? Mr. Trevanion!—no—never, never so base! In your house, trusted by you,—how could you think it? I dared, it may be, to love—at all events, to feel that I could not be insensible to a temptation too strong for me. But to say it to your heiress—to ask love in return—I would as soon have broken open your desk! Frankly I tell you my folly: it is a folly, not a disgrace."

Trevanion came up to me abruptly, as I leant against the bookcase, and, grasping my hand with a cordial kindness, said, "Pardon me! You have behaved as your father's son should—I envy him such a son! Now, listen to me—I cannot give you my daughter—"

"Believe me, sir, I never—"

"Tut, listen! I cannot give you my daughter. I say nothing of inequality—all gentlemen are equal; and if not, any impertinent affectation of superiority, in such a case, would come ill from one who owes his own fortune to his wife! But, as it is, I have a stake in the world, won not by fortune only, but the labor of a life, the suppression of half my nature—the drudging, squaring, taming down all that made the glory and joy of my youth—to be that hard matter-of-fact thing which the English world expect in a *statesman!* This station has gradually opened into its natural result—power! I tell you I shall soon have high office in the administration: I hope to render great services to England—for we English politicians, whatever the mob and the press say of us, are not selfish place-hunters. I refused office, as high as I look for now, ten years ago. We believe in our opinions, and we hail the power that may carry them into effect. In this cabinet I shall have enemies. Oh, don't think we leave jealousy behind us, at the doors of Downing Street! I shall be one of a minority. I know well what must happen: like all men in power, I must strengthen myself by other heads and hands than my own. My daughter shall bring to me the alliance of that house in England which is most necessary to me. My life falls to the ground, like a child's pyramid of cards, if I waste—I do not say on you, but on men of ten times your fortune (whatever that be), the means of strength which are at my disposal in the hand of Fanny Trevanion. To this end I have looked; but to this end her mother has schemed—for these household matters are within a man's hopes, but belong to a woman's policy. So much for us.

"But to you, my dear, and frank, and high-souled young friend—to you, if I were not

Fanny's father—if I were your nearest relation, and Fanny could be had for the asking, with all her princely dower (for it is princely),—to you I should say, fly from a load upon the heart, on the genius, the energy, the pride, and the spirit, which not one man in ten thousand can bear; fly from the curse of owing everything to a wife!—it is a reversal of all natural position, it is a blow to all the manhood within us. You know not what it is; I do! My wife's fortune came not till after marriage—so far, so well; it saved my reputation from the charge of fortune-hunting. But, I tell you, fairly, that if it had never come at all, I should be a prouder, and a greater, and a happier man than I have ever been, or ever can be, with all its advantages; it has been a millstone round my neck. And yet Ellinor has never breathed a word that could wound my pride. Would her daughter be as forbearing? Much as I love Fanny, I doubt if she has the great heart of her mother. You look incredulous;—naturally. Oh, you think I shall sacrifice my child's happiness to a politician's ambition. Folly of youth! Fanny would be wretched with you. She might not think so now; she would five years hence! Fanny will make an admirable duchess, countess, great lady; but wife to a man who owes all to her!—no, no, don't dream it! I shall not sacrifice her happiness, depend on it. I speak plainly, as man to man—man of the world to a man just entering it—but still man to man! What say you?"

"I will think over all you tell me. I know that you are speaking to me most generously—as a father would. Now let me go, and may God keep you and yours!"

"Go—I return your blessing—go! I don't insult you now with offers of service; but, remember, you have a right to command them—in all ways, in all time. Stop!—take this comfort away with you—a sorry comfort now, a great one hereafter. In a position that might have moved anger, scorn, pity, you have made a barren-hearted man honor and admire you. You, a boy, have made me, with my gray hairs, think better of the whole world: tell your father that."

I closed the door, and stole out softly—softly. But when I got into the hall, Fanny suddenly opened the door of the breakfast parlor, and seemed, by her look, her gesture, to invite me in. Her face was very pale, and there were traces of tears on the heavy lids.

I stood still for a moment, and my heart beat violently. I then muttered something inarticulately, and, bowing low, hastened to the door.

I thought, but my ears might deceive me, that I heard my name pronounced; but fortunately the tall porter started from his newspaper and his leathern chair, and the entrance stood open. I joined my father.

"It is all over," said I, with a resolute smile. "And now, my dear father, I feel how grateful I should be for all that your lessons—your life—have taught me;—for, believe me, I am not unhappy."

CHAPTER IV.

We came back to my father's house, and on the stairs we met my mother, whom Roland's grave looks, and her Austin's strange absence, had alarmed. My father quietly led the way to a little room, which my mother had appropriated to Blanche and herself; and then, placing my hand in that which had helped his own steps from the stony path down the quiet vales of life, he said to me,—"Nature gives you here the soother;" and, so saying, he left the room.

And it was true, O my mother! that in thy simple loving breast nature did place the deep wells of comfort! We come to men for philosophy—to women for consolation. And the thousand weaknesses and regrets—the sharp sands of the minutiæ that make up *sorrow*—all these, which I could have betrayed to no *man*—not even to him, the dearest and tenderest of all men—I showed without shame to thee! And thy tears, that fell on my cheek, had the balm of Araby; and my heart, at length, lay lulled and soothed under thy moist gentle eyes.

I made an effort, and joined the little circle at dinner; and I felt grateful that no violent attempt was made to raise my spirits—nothing but affection, more subdued, and soft, and tranquil. Even little Blanche, as if by the intuition of sympathy, ceased her babble, and seemed to hush her footstep as she crept to my side. But after dinner, when we had reassembled in

the drawing-room, the lights shone bright, and the curtains were let down—and only the quick roll of some passing wheels reminded us that there was a world without—my father began to talk. He had laid aside all his work; the younger but less perishable child was forgotten,—and my father began to talk.

"It is," said he musingly, "a well-known thing, that particular drugs or herbs suit the body according to its particular diseases. When we are ill, we don't open our medicine-chest at random, and take out any powder or phial that comes to hand. The skilful doctor is he who adjusts the dose to the malady."

"Of that there can be no doubt," quoth Captain Roland. "I remember a notable instance of the justice of what you say. When I was in Spain, both my horse and I fell ill at the same time; a dose was sent for each; and, by some infernal mistake, I swallowed the horse's physic, and the horse, poor thing, swallowed mine!"

"And what was the result?" asked my father.

"The horse died!" answered Roland mournfully—"a valuable beast—bright bay, with a star!"

"And you?"

"Why, the doctor said it ought to have killed me; but it took a great deal more than a paltry bottle of physic to kill a man in my regiment."

"Nevertheless, we arrive at the same conclusion," pursued my father,—"I with my theory, you with your experience,—that the physic we take must not be chosen hap-hazard; and that a mistake in the bottle may kill a horse. But when we come to the medicine for the mind, how little do we think of the golden rule which common-sense applies to the body!"

"Anan," said the Captain, "what medicine is there for the mind? Shakspeare has said something on that subject, which, if I recollect right, implies that there is no ministering to a mind diseased."

"I think not, brother; he only said physic (meaning boluses and black draughts) would not do it. And Shakspeare was the last man to find fault with his own art; for, verily, he has been a great physician to the mind."

"Ah! I take you now, brother,—books again! So you think that, when a man breaks his heart, or loses his fortune, or his daughter—(Blanche, child, come here)—that you have only to clap a plaster of print on the sore place, and all is well. I wish you would find me such a cure."

"Will you try it?"

"If it is not Greek," said my uncle.

CHAPTER V.

MY FATHER'S CROTCHET ON THE HYGEIENIC CHEMISTRY OF BOOKS.

"If," said my father—and here his hand was deep in his waistcoat—"if we accept the authority of Diodorus, as to the inscription on the great Egyptian library—and I don't see why Diodorus should not be as near the mark as any one e.se?" added my father interrogatively, turning round.

My mother thought herself the person addressed, and nodded her gracious assent to the authority of Diodorus. His opinion thus fortified, my father continued,—"If, I say, we accept the authority of Diodorus, the inscription on the Egyptian library was—'The Medicine of the Mind.' Now, that phrase has become notoriously trite and hackneyed, and people repeat vaguely that books are the medicine of the mind. Yes; but to apply the medicine is the thing!"

"So you have told us at least twice before, brother," quoted the Captain, bluffly. "And what Diodorus has to do with it, I know no more than the man of the moon."

"I shall never get on at this rate," said my father, in a tone between reproach and entreaty.

"Be good children, Roland and Blanche both," said my mother, stopping from her work, and holding up her needle threateningly—and indeed inflicting a slight puncture upon the Captain's shoulder.

"Rem *acu* tetigisti, my dear," said my father, borrowing Cicero's pun on the occasion.* "And now we shall go upon velvet. I say, then, that books, taken indiscriminately, are no cure to the diseases and afflictions of the mind. There is a world of science necessary in the

* Cicero's joke on a senator who was the son of a tailor—"Thou hast touched the thing sharply" (or with a needle—*acu*).

taking them. I have known some people in greet sorrow fly to a novel, or the last light book in fashion. One might as well take a rose-draught for the plague. Light reading does not do when the heart is really heavy. I am told that Goethe, when he lost his son, took to study a science that was new to him. Ah! Goethe was a physician who knew what he was about. In a great grief like that, you cannot tickle and divert the mind; you must wrench it away, abstract, absorb—bury it in an abyss, hurry it into a labyrinth. Therefore, for the irremediable sorrows of middle life and old age, I recommend a strict chronic course of science and hard reasoning—Counter-irritation. Bring the brain to act upon the heart! If science is too much against the grain (for we have not all got mathematical heads), something in the reach of the humblest understanding, but sufficiently searching to the highest—a new language—Greek, Arabic, Scandinavian, Chinese, or Welch! For the loss of fortune, the dose should be applied less directly to the understanding.—I would administer something elegant and cordial. For as the heart is crushed and lacerated by a loss in the affections, so it is rather the head that aches and suffers by the loss of money. Here we find the higher class of poets a very valuable remedy. For observe that poets of the grander and more comprehensive kind of genius have in them two separate men, quite distinct from each other—the imaginative man, and the practical, circumstantial man; and it is the happy mixture of these that suits diseases of the mind, half imaginative and half practical. There is Homer, now lost with the gods, now at home with the homeliest, the very 'poet of circumstance,' as Gray has finely called him; and yet with imagination enough to seduce and coax the dullest into forgetting, for a while, that little spot on his desk which his banker's book can cover. There is Virgil, far below him, indeed—

'Virgil the wise,
Whose verse walks highest, but not flies,'

as Cowley expresses it. But Virgil still has genius enough to be two men—to lead you into the fields, not only to listen to the pastoral reed, and to hear the bees hum, but to note how you can make the most of the glebe and the vineyard. There is Horace, charming man of the world, who will condole with you feelingly on the loss of your fortune, and by no means undervalue the good things of this life; but who will yet show you that a man may be happy with a *vile modicum*, or *parva rura*. There is Shakspeare, who, above all poets, is the mysterious dual of hard sense and empyreal fancy—and a great many more, whom I need not name; but who, if you take to them gently and quietly, will not, like your mere philosopher, your unreasonable stoic, tell you that you have lost nothing; but who will insensibly steal you out of this world, with its losses and crosses, and slip you into another world, before you know where you are!—a world where you are just as welcome, though you carry no more earth of your lost acres with you than covers the sole of your shoe. Then, for hypochondria and satiety, what is better than a brisk alterative course of travels—especially early, out-of-the-way, marvellous, legendary travels! How they freshen up the spirits! How they take you out of the humdrum yawning state you are in. See, with Herodotus, young Greece spring up into life; or note with him how already the wondrous old Orient world is crumbling into giant decay; or go with Carpini and Rubruquis to Tartary, meet 'the carts of Zagathai laden with houses, and think that a great city is travelling towards you.' * Gaze on that vast wild empire of the Tartar, where the descendants of Jenghis 'multiply and disperse over the immense waste desert, which is as boundless as the ocean.' Sail with the early northern discoverers, and penetrate to the heart of winter, among sea-serpents and bears, and tusked morses, with the faces of men. Then, what think you of Columbus, and the stern soul of Cortes, and the kingdom of Mexico, and the strange gold city of the Peruvians, with that audacious brute Pizarro? and the Polynesians, just for all the world like the ancient Britons? and the American Indians, and the South-Sea Islanders? how petulant, and young, and adventurous, and frisky your hypochondriac must get upon a regimen like that! Then, for that vice of the mind which I call sectarianism—not in the religious sense of the word, but little, narrow prejudices, that make you hate your next-door neighbor, because he has his eggs roasted when you have yours boiled; and gossiping

* RUBRUQUIS, sect. xii.

and prying into people's affairs, and backbiting, and thinking heaven and earth are coming together, if some broom touch a cobweb that you have let grow over the window-sill of your brains—what like a large and generous, mildly aperient (I beg your pardon, my dear) course of history! How it clears away all the fumes of the head!—better than the hellebore with which the old leeches of the middle ages purged the cerebellum. There, amidst all that great whirl and *sturmbad* (storm-bath), as the Germans say, of kingdoms and empires, and races and ages, how your mind enlarges beyond that little, feverish animosity to John Styles; or that unfortunate prepossession of yours, that all the world is interested in your grievances against Tom Stokes and his wife!

"I can only touch, you see, on a few ingredients in this magnificent pharmacy—its resources are boundless, but require the nicest discretion. I remember to have cured a disconsolate widower, who obstinately refused every other medicament, by a strict course of geology. I dipped him deep into gneiss and mica schist. Amidst the first strata, I suffered the watery action to expend itself upon cooling crystallized masses; and, by the time I had got him into the tertiary period, amongst the transition chalks of Maestricht, and the conchiferous marls of Gosau, he was ready for a new wife. Kitty, my dear! it is no laughing matter. I made no less notable a cure of a young scholar at Cambridge, who was meant for the church, when he suddenly caught a cold fit of free-thinking, with great shiverings, from wading out of his depth in Spinosa. None of the divines, whom I first tried, did him the least good in that state; so I turned over a new leaf, and doctored him gently upon the chapters of faith in Abraham Tucker's book, (you should read it, Sisty;) then I threw in strong doses of Fichte; after that I put him on the Scotch metaphysicians, with plunge-baths into certain German transcendentalists; and having convinced him that faith is not an unphilosophical state of mind, and that he might believe without compromising his understanding—for he was mightily conceited on that score—I threw in my divines, which he was now fit to digest; and his theological constitution, since then, has become so robust, that he has eaten up two livings and a deanery! In fact, I have a plan for a library that, instead of heading its compartments, 'Philology, Natural Science, Poetry,' etc., one shall head them according to the diseases for which they are severally good, bodily and mental—up from a dire calamity, or the pangs of the gout, down to a fit of the spleen or a slight catarrh; for which last your light reading comes in with a whey-posset and barley-water. But," continued my father, more gravely, "when some one sorrow, that is yet reparable, gets hold of your mind like a monomania—when you think, because heaven has denied you this or that, on which you had set your heart, that all your life must be a blank—oh! then diet yourself well on biography—the biography of good and great men. See how little a space one sorrow really makes in life. See scarce a page, perhaps, given to some grief similar to your own; and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it! You thought the wing was broken!—Tut—tut—it was but a bruised feather! See what life leaves behind it when all is done!—a summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and suffering, linking themselves with the being of the world. Yes, biography is the medicine here! Roland, you said you would try my prescription—here it is,"—and my father took up a book, and reached it to the Captain.

My uncle looked over it—*Life of the Reverend Robert Hall.* "Brother, he was a Dissenter, and, thank heaven! I am a church-and-state man, to the back-bone!"

"Robert Hall was a brave man, and a true soldier under the Great Commander," said my father, artfully.

The Captain mechanically carried his forefinger to his forehead in military fashion, and saluted the book respectfully.

"I have another copy for you, Pisistratus—that is mine which I have lent Roland. This, which I bought for you to-day, you will keep."

"Thank you, sir," said I, listlessly, not seeing what great good the *Life of Robert Hall* could do me, or why the same medicine should suit the old weather-beaten uncle, and the nephew yet in his teens.

"I have said nothing," resumed my father, slightly bowing his broad temples, "of the Book of Books, for that is the *lignum vitæ*, the cardinal medicine for all. These are but the subsidiaries: for, as you may remember, my dear Kitty, that I have said before—we can

never keep the system quite right unless we place just in the centre of the great ganglionic system, whence the nerves carry its influence gently and smoothly through the whole frame —THE SAFFRON BAG!"

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, I took my hat to go out, when my father, looking at me, and seeing by my countenance that I had not slept, said gently—

"My dear Pisistratus, you have not tried my medicine yet."

"What medicine, sir?"

"Robert Hall."

"No, indeed, not yet," said I, smiling.

"Do so, my son, before you go out; depend on it, you will enjoy your walk more."

I confess that it was with some reluctance I obeyed. I went back to my own room, and sate resolutely down to my task. Are there any of you, my readers, who have not read the *Life of Robert Hall?* If so, in the words of the great Captain Cuttle, "When found, make a note of it." Never mind what your theological opinion is—Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Pædobaptist, Independent, Quaker, Unitarian, Philosopher, Free-thinker,—send for Robert Hall! Yea, if there exist yet on earth descendants of the arch-heresies, which made such a noise in their day—men who believe with Saturninus that the world was made by seven angels; or with Basilides, that there are as many heavens as there are days in the year; or with the Nicolaitanes, that men ought to have their wives in common (plenty of that sect still, especially in the Red Republic); or with their successors, the Gnostics, who believed in Jaldaboath; or with the Carpacratians, that the world was made by the devil; or with the Cerinthians, and Ebionites, and Nazarites (which last discovered that the name of Noah's wife was Ouria, and that she set the ark on fire); or with the Valentinians, who taught that there were thirty Æones, ages, or worlds, born out of Profundity (Bathos), male, and Silence, female; or with the Marcites, Colarbasii, and Heracleonites (who still kept up that bother about Æones, Mr. Profundity and Mrs. Silence); or with the Ophites, who are said to have worshipped the serpent; or the Cainites, who ingeniously found out a reason for honoring Judas, because he foresaw what good would come to men by betraying our Saviour; or with the Sethites, who made Seth a part of the divine substance; or with the Archonticks, Ascothyptæ, Cerdonians, Marcionites, the disciples of Apelles, and Severus (the last was a tee-totaller, and said wine was begot by Satan!), or of Tatian, who thought all the descendants of Adam were irretrievably damned except themselves (some of those Tatiani are certainly extant!), or the Cataphrygians, who were also called Tascodragitæ, because they thrust their forefingers up their nostrils to show their devotion; or the Pepuzians, Quintilians, and Artotyrites; or—but no matter. If I go through all the follies of men in search of the truth, I shall never get to the end of my chapter, or back to Robert Hall: whatever, then, thou art, orthodox or heterodox, send for the *Life of Robert Hall.* It is the life of a man that it does good to manhood itself to contemplate.

I had finished the biography, which is not long, and was musing over it, when I heard the Captain's cork-leg upon the stairs. I opened the door for him, and he entered, book in hand, as I, also, book in hand, stood ready to receive him.

"Well, sir," said Roland, seating himself, "has the prescription done you any good?"

"Yes, uncle—great."

"And me too. By Jupiter, Sisty, that same Hall was a fine fellow! I wonder if the medicine has gone through the same channels in both? Tell me first how it has affected you."

"*Imprimis*, then, my dear uncle, I fancy that a book like this must do good to all who live in the world in the ordinary manner, by admitting us into a circle of life of which I suspect we think but little. Here is a man connecting himself directly with a heavenly purpose, and cultivating considerable faculties to that one end; seeking to accomplish his soul as far as he can, that he may do most good on earth, and take a higher existence up to heaven; a man intent upon a sublime and spiritual duty: in short, living as it were in it, and so filled with the consciousness of immortality, and so strong in the link between God and man, that, without any affected stoicism, without being insensible to pain—rather, perhaps, from a ner-

vous temperament, acutely feeling it—he yet has a happiness wholly independent of it. It is impossible not to be thrilled with an admiration that elevates while it awes you, in reading that solemn 'Dedication of himself to God.' This offering of 'soul and body, time, health, reputation, talents,' to the divine and invisible Principle of Good, calls us suddenly to contemplate the selfishness of our own views and hopes, and awakens us from the egotism that exacts all and resigns nothing.

"But this book has mostly struck upon the chord in my own heart, in that characteristic which my father indicated as belonging to all biography. Here is a life of remarkable *fulness*, great study, great thought, and great action; and yet," said I, coloring, "how small a place those feelings, which have tyrannized over me, and made all else seem blank and void, hold in that life. It is not as if the man were a cold and hard ascetic; it is easy to see in him not only remarkable tenderness and warm affections, but strong self-will, and the passion of all vigorous natures. Yes! I understand better now what existence in a true man should be."

"All that is very well said," quoth the Captain, "but it did not strike me. What I have seen in this book is courage. Here is a poor creature rolling on the carpet with agony; from childhood to death tortured by a mysterious incurable malady—a malady that is described as 'an internal apparatus of torture;' and who does, by his heroism, more than *bear* it—he puts it out of power to affect him; and though (here is the passage) 'his appointment by day and by night was incessant pain, yet high enjoyment was, notwithstanding, the law of his existence.' Robert Hall reads me a lesson—me, an old soldier, who thought myself above taking lessons—in courage, at least. And, as I came to that passage when, in the sharp paroxysms before death, he says, 'I have not complained, have I, sir?—and I won't complain!'—when I came to that passage I started up, and cried, 'Roland de Caxton, thou hast been a coward! and, an thou hadst had thy deserts, thou hadst been cashiered, broken, and drummed out of the regiment long ago!'"

"After all, then, my father was not so wrong—he placed his guns right, and fired a good shot."

"He must have been from 6° to 9° above the crest of the parapet," said my uncle, thoughtfully—"which, I take it, is the best elevation, both for shot and shells, in enfilading a work."

"What say you, then, Captain?—up with our knapsacks, and on with the march!"

"Right about—face!" cried my uncle, as erect as a column.

"No looking back, if we can help it."

"Full in the front of the enemy. 'Up, guards, and at 'em!'"

"'England expects every man to do his duty!'"

"Cypress or laurel!" cried my uncle, waving the book over his head.

CHAPTER VII.

I WENT out—and to see Francis Vivian; for, on leaving Mr. Trevanion, I was not without anxiety for my new friend's future provision. But Vivian was from home, and I strolled from his lodgings into the suburbs on the other side of the river, and began to meditate seriously on the best course now to pursue. In quitting my present occupations, I resigned prospects far more brilliant, and fortunes far more rapid than I could ever hope to realize in any other entrance into life. But I felt the necessity, if I desired to keep steadfast to that more healthful frame of mind I had obtained, of some manly and continuous labor—some earnest employment. My thoughts flew back to the university; and the quiet of its cloisters, which, until I had been blinded by the glare of the London world, and grief had somewhat dulled the edge of my quick desires and hopes, had seemed to me cheerless and unaltering—took an inviting aspect. It presented what I needed most—a new scene, a new arena, a partial return into boyhood; repose for passions prematurely raised; activity for the reasoning powers in fresh directions. I had not lost my time in London: I had kept up, if not studies purely classical, at least the habits of application; I had sharpened my general comprehension, and augmented my resources. Accordingly, when I returned home, I resolved to speak to my father. But I found he had forestalled me; and, on entering, my mother drew me up stairs into her room, with a

smile kindled by my smile, and told me that she and her Austin had been thinking that it was best that I should leave London as soon as possible; that my father found he could now dispense with the library of the Museum for some months; that the time for which they had taken their lodgings would be up in a few days; that the summer was far advanced, town odious, the country beautiful—in a word, we were to go home. There I could prepare myself for Cambridge, till the long vacation was over; and, my mother added hesitatingly, and with a prefatory caution to spare my health, that my father, whose income could ill afford the requisite allowance to me, counted on my soon lightening his burden, by getting a scholarship. I felt how much provident kindness there was in all this—even in that hint of a scholarship, which was meant to rouse my faculties, and spur me, by affectionate incentives, to a new ambition. I was not less delighted than grateful.

"But poor Roland," said I, "and little Blanche—will they come with us?"

"I fear not," said my mother, "for Roland is anxious to get back to his tower; and in a day or two, he will be well enough to move."

"Do you not think, my dear mother, that, somehow or other, this lost son of his had something to do with Roland's illness—that the illness was as much mental as physical?"

"I have no doubt of it, Sisty. What a sad, bad heart that young man must have!"

"My uncle seems to have abandoned all hope of finding him in London; otherwise, ill as he has been, I am sure we could not have kept him at home. So he goes back to the old tower. Poor man, he must be dull enough there! We must contrive to pay him a visit. Does Blanche ever speak of her brother?"

"No; for it seems they were not brought up much together—at all events, she does not remember him. How lovely she is! Her mother must surely have been very handsome."

"She is a pretty child, certainly, though in a strange style of beauty—such immense eyes!—and affectionate, and loves Roland as she ought."

And here the conversation dropped.

Our plans being thus decided, it was necessary that I should lose no time in seeing Vivian, and making some arrangement for the future. His manner had lost so much of its abruptness, that I thought I could venture to recommend him personally to Trevanion; and I knew, after what had passed, that Trevanion would make a point to oblige me. I resolved to consult my father about it. As yet, I had either never found, or never made the opportunity to talk to my father on the subject, he had been so occupied; and, if he had proposed to see my new friend, what answer could I have made, in the teeth of Vivian's cynic objections? However, as we were now going away, that last consideration ceased to be of importance; and, for the first, the student had not yet entirely settled back to his books. I therefore watched the time when my father walked down to the Museum, and, slipping my arm in his, I told him, briefly and rapidly, as he went along, how I had formed this strange acquaintance, and how I was now situated. The story did not interest my father quite so much as I excepted, and he did not understand all the complexities of Vivian's character—how could he?—for he answered briefly, "I should think that, for a young man, apparently without a sixpence, and whose education seems so imperfect, any resource in Trevanion must be most temporary and uncertain. Speak to your uncle Jack—he can find him some place, I have no doubt—perhaps a readership in a printer's office, or a reporter's place on some journal, if he is fit for it. But if you want to steady him, let it be something regular."

Therewith my father dismissed the matter, and vanished through the gates of the Museum. Readership to a printer—reportership on a journal—for a young gentleman with the high notions and arrogant vanity of Francis Vivian—his ambition already soaring far beyond kid gloves and a cabriolet! The idea was hopeless; and, perplexed and doubtful, I took my way to Vivian's lodgings. I found him at home, and unemployed, standing by his window, with folded arms, and in a state of such reverie that he was not aware of my entrance till I had touched him on the shoulder.

"Ha!" said he then, with one of his short, quick, impatient sighs, "I thought you had given me up, and forgotten me—but you look pale and harassed. I could almost think you had grown thinner within the last few days."

"Oh! never mind me, Vivian: I have come to speak of yourself I have left Trevanion;

it is settled that I should go to the university —and we all quit town in a few days."

"In a few days !—all !—who are all ? "

"My family—father, mother, uncle, cousin, and myself. But, my dear fellow, now let us think seriously what is best to be done for you. I can present you to Trevanion."

"Ha ! "

"But Trevanion is a hard, though an excellent man; and, moreover, as he is always changing the subjects that engross him, in a month or so he may have nothing to give you. You said you would work—will you consent not to complain if the work cannot be done in kid gloves? Young men who have risen high in the world have begun, it is well known, as reporters to the press. It is a situation of respectability, and in request, and not easy to obtain, I fancy; but still—"

Vivian interrupted me hastily—

"Thank you a thousand times ! but what you say confirms a resolution I had taken before you came. I shall make it up with my family, and return home."

"Oh ! I am so really glad. How wise in you ! "

Vivian turned away his head abruptly—

"Your pictures of family life and domestic peace, you see," he said, "seduced me more than you thought. When do you leave town ? "

"Why, I believe, early next week ? "

"So soon," said Vivian, thoughtfully. "Well, perhaps I may ask you yet to introduce me to Mr. Trevanion; for—who knows ?—my family and I may fall out again. But I will consider. I think I have heard you say that this Trevanion is a very old friend of your father's or uncle's ? "

"He, or rather Lady Ellinor, is an old friend of both."

"And therefore would listen to your recommendations of me. But perhaps I may not need them. So you have left—left of your own accord—a situation that seemed more enjoyable, I should think, than rooms in a college;—left—why did you leave ? "

And Vivian fixed his bright eyes full and piercingly on mine.

"It was only for a time, for a trial, that I was there," said I, evasively; "out at nurse, as it were, till the Alma Mater opened her arms—*alma* indeed she ought to be to my father's son."

Vivian looked unsatisfied with my explanation, but did not question me farther. He himself was the first to turn the conversation, and he did this with more affectionate cordiality than was common to him. He inquired into our general plans, into the probabilities of our return to town, and drew from me a description of our rural Tusculum. He was quiet and subdued; and once or twice I thought there was a moisture in those luminous eyes. We parted with more of the unreserve and fondness of youthful friendship—at least on my part, and seemingly on his—than had yet endeared our singular intimacy; for the cement of cordial attachment had been wanting to an intercourse in which one party refused all confidence, and the other mingled distrust and fear with keen interest and compassionate admiration.

That evening, before lights were brought in, my father, turning to me, abruptly asked if I had seen my friend, and what he was about to do.

"He thinks of returning to his family," said I.

Roland, who had seemed dozing, winced uneasily.

"Who returns to his family," asked the Captain.

"Why, you must know," said my father, "that Sisty has fished up a friend of whom he can give no account that would satisfy a policeman, and whose fortunes he thinks himself under the necessity of protecting. You are very lucky that he has not picked your pockets, Sisty; but I dare say he has? What's his name ? "

"Vivian," said I—"Francis Vivian."

"A good name, and a Cornish," said my father. "Some derive it from the Romans—Vivianus; others from a Celtic word, which means "—

"Vivian ! " interrupted Roland—"Vivian ! —I wonder if it be the son of Colonel Vivian ? "

"He is certainly a gentleman's son," said I; "but he never told me what his family and connections were."

"Vivian," repeated my uncle—"poor Colonel Vivian ! So the young man is going to his father. I have no doubt it is the same. Ah ! "—

"What do you know of Colonel Vivian, or

his son?" said I. "Pray, tell me, I am so interested in this young man."

"I know nothing of either, except by gossip," said my uncle, moodily. "I did hear that Colonel Vivian, an excellent officer and honorable man, had been in—in—(Roland's voice faltered)—in great grief about his son, whom, a mere boy, he had prevented from some improper marriage, and who had run away and left him—it was supposed for America. The story affected me at the time," added my uncle, trying to speak calmly.

We were all silent, for we felt why Roland was so disturbed, and why Colonel Vivian's grief should have touched him home. Similarity in affliction makes us brothers even to the unknown.

"You say he is going home to his family—I am heartily glad of it!" said the envying old soldier, gallantly.

The lights came in then, and two minutes after, Uncle Roland and I were nestled close to each other, side by side; and I was reading over his shoulder, and his finger was silently resting on that passage that had so struck him —"I have not complained—have I, sir?—and I won't complain!"

PART TENTH.

CHAPTER I.

My uncle's conjecture as to the parentage of Francis Vivian seemed to me a positive discovery. Nothing more likely than that this wilful boy had formed some headstrong attachment which no father would sanction, and so, thwarted and irritated, thrown himself on the world. Such an explanation was the more agreeable to me, as it cleared up much that had appeared discreditable in the mystery that surrounded Vivian. I could never bear to think that he had done anything mean and criminal, however I might believe he had been rash and faulty. It was natural that the unfriended wanderer should have been thrown into a society, the equivocal character of which had failed to revolt the audacity of an inquisitive mind and adventurous temper; but it was natural, also, that the habits of gentle birth, and that silent education which English gentlemen commonly receive from their very cradle, should have preserved his honor, at least, intact through all. Certainly the pride, the notions, the very faults of the wellborn had remained in full force—why not the better qualities, however smothered for the time? I felt thankful for the thought that Vivian was returning to an element in which he might repurify his mind, —refit himself for that sphere to which he belonged;—thankful that we might yet meet, and our present half intimacy mature, perhaps, into healthful friendship.

It was with such thoughts that I took up my hat the next morning to seek Vivian, and judge if we had gained the right clue, when we were startled by what was a rare sound at our door —the postman's knock. My father was at the Museum; my mother in high conference, or close preparation for our approaching departure, with Mrs. Primmins; Roland, I, and Blanche had the room to ourselves.

"The letter is not for me," said Pisistratus.

"Not for me, I am sure," said the Captain, when the servant entered and confuted him—for the letter was for him. He took it up wonderingly and suspiciously, as Glumdalclitch took up Gulliver, or as (if naturalists) we take up an unknown creature, that we are not quite sure will not bite and sting us. Ah! it has stung or bit you, Captain Roland! for you start and change color—you suppress a cry as you break the seal—you breathe hard as you read—and the letter seems short—but it takes time in the reading, for you go over it again and again. Then you fold it up—crumple it —thrust it into your breast pocket—and look round like a man waking from a dream. Is it a dream of pain or of pleasure? Verily, I cannot guess, for nothing is on that eagle face either of pain or pleasure, but rather of fear, agitation, bewilderment. Yet the eyes are bright, too, and there is a smile on that iron lip.

My uncle looked round, I say, and called hastily for his cane and his hat, and then began buttoning his coat across his broad breast, though the day was hot enough to have unbuttoned every breast in the metropolis.

"You are not going out, uncle?"

"Yes, yes."

"But are you strong enough yet? Let me go with you?"

"No, sir; no. Blanche, come here." He took the child in his arms, surveyed her wistfully, and kissed her. "You have never given me pain, Blanche: say, 'God bless and prosper you, father!'"

"God bless and prosper my dear, dear papa!" said Blanche, putting her little hands together, as if in prayer.

"There — that should bring me luck, Blanche," said the captain, gaily, and setting her down. Then seizing his cane from the servant, and putting on his hat with a determined air, he walked stoutly forth; and I saw him, from the window, march along the streets as cheerfully as if he had been besieging Badajoz.

"God prosper thee, too!" said I, involuntarily.

And Blanche took hold of my hand, and said in her prettiest way (and her pretty ways were many), "I wish you would come with us, cousin Sisty, and help me to love papa. Poor papa! he wants us both—he wants all the love we can give him!"

"That he does, my dear Blanche; and I think it a great mistake that we don't all live together. Your papa ought not to go to that tower of his, at the world's end, but come to our snug, pretty house, with a garden full of flowers, for you to be Queen of the May—from May to November;—to say nothing of a duck that is more sagacious than any creature in the Fables I gave you the other day."

Blanche laughed and clapped her hands—"Oh, that would be so nice! But,"—and she stopped gravely, and added, "but then, you see, there would not be the Tower to love papa; and I am sure that the Tower must love him very much, for he loves it dearly."

It was my turn to laugh now. "I see how it is, you little witch!" said I; "you would coax us to come and live with you and the owls! With all my heart, so far as I am concerned."

"Sisty," said Blanche, with an appalling solemnity on her face, "do you know what I have been thinking?"

"Not I, miss—what?—something very deep, I can see—very horrible, indeed, I fear—you look so serious."

"Why, I've been thinking," continued Blanche, not relaxing a muscle, and without the least bit of a blush—"I've been thinking that I'll be your little wife; and then, of course, we shall all live together."

Blanch did not blush, but I did. "Ask me that ten years hence, if you dare, you impudent little thing; and now, run away to Mrs. Primmins, and tell her to keep you out of mischief, for I must say good morning."

But Blanche did not run away, and her dignity seemed exceedingly hurt at my mode of taking her alarming proposition, for she retired into a corner pouting, and sat down with great majesty. So there I left her, and went my way to Vivian. He was out; but, seeing books on his table, and having nothing to do, I resolved to wait for his return. I had enough of my father in me to turn at once to the books for company; and, by the side of some graver works which I had recommended, I found certain novels in French, that Vivian had got from a circulating library. I had a curiosity to read these—for, except the old classic novels of France, this mighty branch of its popular literature was then new to me. I soon got interested, but what an interest!—the interest that a nightmare might excite, if one caught it out of one's sleep, and set to work to examine it. By the side of what dazzling shrewdness, what deep knowledge of those holes and corners in the human system, of which Goethe must have spoken when he said somewhere—(if I recollect right, and don't misquote him, which I'll not answer for)—"There is something in every man's heart which, if we could know, would make us hate him,"—by the side of all this, and of much more that showed prodigious boldness and energy of intellect, what strange exaggeration—what mock nobility of sentiment—what inconceivable perversion of reasoning—what damnable demoralization! The true artist, whether in Romance or the Drama, will often necessarily interest us in a vicious or criminal character—but he does not the less leave clear to our reprobation the vice or the crime. But here I found myself called upon not only to feel interest in the villain (which would be perfectly allowable,—I am very much interested in Macbeth and Lovelace),—but to admire and sympathize with the villany itself. Nor was it the confusion of all wrong and right in individual character that shocked me the most—but rather the view of society altogether, painted in colors so hideous that, if true, instead of a revolution, it would draw down a deluge;—it was the hatred, carefully instilled, of the poor against the rich—it was the war breathed between class and class—it was that envy of all superiorities, which loves to show itself by allowing virtue only to a blouse, and asserting that a man must be a rogue if he belong to that rank of society in

which, from the very gifts of education, from the necessary associations of circumstance, roguery is the last thing probable or natural. It was all this, and things a thousand times worse, that set my head in a whirl, as hour after hour slipped on, and I still gazed, spell-bound, on these Chimæras and Typhons—these symbols of the Destroying Principle. "Poor Vivian!" said I, as I rose at last, "if thou readest these books with pleasure, or from habit, no wonder that thou seemest to me so obtuse about right and wrong, and to have a great cavity where thy brain should have the bump of 'conscientiousness' in full salience!"

Nevertheless, to do those demoniacs justice, I had got through time imperceptibly by their pestilent help; and I was startled to see, by my watch, how late it was. I had just resolved to leave a line fixing an appointment for the morrow, and so depart, when I heard Vivian's knock—a knock that had great character in it—haughty, impatient, irregular; not a neat, symmetrical, harmonious, unpretending knock, but a knock that seemed to set the whole house and street at defiance: it was a knock bullying—a knock ostentatious—a knock irritating and offensive—"impiger," and "iracundus."

But the step that came up the stairs did not suit the knock! it was a step light, yet firm—slow, yet elastic.

The maid-servant who had opened the door had, no doubt, informed Vivian of my visit, for he did not seem surprised to see me; but he cast that hurried suspicious look round the room which a man is apt to cast when he has left his papers about, and finds some idler, on whose trustworthiness he by no means depends, seated in the midst of the unguarded secrets. The look was not flattering; but my conscience was so unreproachful that I laid all the blame upon the general suspiciousness of Vivian's character.

"Three hours, at least, have I been here!" said I, maliciously.

"Three hours!"—again the look.

"And this is the worst secret I have discovered,"—and I pointed to those literary Manicheans.

"Oh!" said he, carelessly, "French novels!—I don't wonder you stayed so long. I can't read your English novels—flat and insipid: there are truth and life here."

"Truth and life!" cried I, every hair on my head erect with astonishment—"then hurrah for falsehood and death!"

"They don't please you; no accounting for tastes."

"I beg your pardon—I account for yours, if you really take for truth and life monsters so nefast and flagitious. For heaven's sake, my dear fellow, don't suppose that any man could get on in England—get anywhere but to the Old Bailey or Norfolk Island, if he squared his conduct to such topsy-turvy notions of the world as I find here."

"How many years are you my senior," asked Vivian, sneeringly, "that you should play the mentor, and correct my ignorance of the world?"

"Vivian, it is not age and experience that speak here, it is something far wiser than they—the instinct of a man's heart, and a gentleman's honor."

"Well, well," said Vivian, rather discomposed, "let the poor books alone; you know my creed—that books influence us little one way or the other."

"By the great Egyptian library, and the soul of Diodorus! I wish you could hear my father upon that point. Come," added I, with sublime compassion—"come, it is not too late—do let me introduce you to my father. I will consent to read French novels all my life, if a single chat with Austin Caxton does not send you home with a happier face and a lighter heart. Come, let me take you back to dine with us to-day."

"I cannot," said Vivian, with some confusion—"I cannot, for this day I leave London. Some other time perhaps—for," he added, but not heartily, "we may meet again."

"I hope so," said I, wringing his hand, "and that is likely,—since, in spite of yourself, I have guessed your secret—your birth and parentage."

"How!" cried Vivian, turning pale, and gnawing his lip—"what do you mean?—speak."

"Well then, are you not the lost, runaway son of Colonel Vivian? Come, say the truth; let us be confidants."

Vivian threw off a succession of his abrupt sighs; and then, seating himself, leant his face on the table, confused, no doubt, to find himself discovered.

"You are near the mark," said he at last.

"but do not ask me farther yet. Some day," he cried impetuously, and springing suddenly to his feet—"some day you shall know all: yes; some day, if I live, when that name shall be high in the world; yes, when the world is at my feet!" He stretched his right hand as if to grasp the space, and his whole face was lighted with a fierce enthusiasm. The glow died away, and with a slight return of his scornful smile, he said—"Dreams yet; dreams! And now, look at this paper." And he drew out a memoranda, scrawled over with figures.

"This, I think, is my pecuniary debt to you; in a few days I shall discharge it. Give me your address."

"Oh!" said I, pained, "can you speak to me of money, Vivian?"

"It is one of those instincts of honor you cite so often," answered he, coloring. "Pardon me."

"That is my address," said I, stooping to write, in order to conceal my wounded feelings. "You will avail yourself of it, I hope, often, and tell me that you are well and happy."

"When I am happy you shall know."

"You do not require any introduction to Trevanion?"

Vivian hesitated: "No, I think not. If ever I do, I will write for it."

I took up my hat, and was about to go—for I was still chilled and mortified—when, as if by an irresistible impulse, Vivian came to me hastily, flung his arms round my neck, and kissed me as a boy kisses his brother.

"Bear with me!" he cried in a faltering voice: "I did not think to love any one as you have made me love you, though sadly against the grain. If you are not my good angel, it is that nature and habit are too strong for you. Certainly, some day we shall meet again. I shall have time, in the meanwhile, to see if the world can be indeed 'mine oyster, which I with sword can open.' I would be *aut Cæsar aut nullus!* Very little other Latin know I to quote from! If Cæsar, men will forgive me all the means to the end; if *nullus*, London has a river, and in every street one may buy a cord!"

"Vivian! Vivian!"

"Now go, my dear friend, while my heart is softened—go, before I shock you with some return of the native Adam. Go—go!"

And taking me gently by the arm, Francis Vivian drew me from the room, and, re-entering, locked his door.

Ah! if I could have left him Robert Hall, instead of those execrable Typhons! But would that medicine have suited his case, or must grim Experience write sterner prescriptions with iron hand?

CHAPTER II.

When I got back, just in time for dinner, Roland had not returned, nor did he return till late in the evening. All our eyes were directed towards him, as we rose with one accord to give him welcome; but his face was like a mask—it was locked, and rigid, and unreadable.

Shutting the door carefully after him, he came to the hearth, stood on it, upright and calm, for a few moments, and then asked—

"Has Blanche gone to bed?"

"Yes," said my mother, "but not to sleep, I am sure; she made me promise to tell her when you came back."

Roland's brow relaxed.

"To-morrow, sister," said he, slowly, "will you see that she has the proper mourning made for her? My son is dead."

"Dead!" we cried with one voice, and surrounding him with one impulse.

"Dead! impossible—you could not say it so calmly. Dead—how do you know? You may be deceived. Who told you?—why do you think so?"

"I have seen his remains," said my uncle, with the same gloomy calm. "We will all mourn for him. Pisistratus, you are heir to my name now, as to your father's. Good-night; excuse me, all—all you dear and kind ones; I am worn out."

Roland lighted his candle and went away, leaving us thunder-struck; but he came back again—look round—took up his book, open in the favorite passage—nodded again and again vanished. We looked at each other as if we had seen a ghost. Then my father rose and went out of the room, and remained in Roland's till the night was well nigh gone! We sat up—my mother and I—till he returned. His benign face looked profoundly sad.

"How is it, sir? Can you tell us more?"

My father shook his head.

"Roland prays that you may preserve the same forbearance you have shown hitherto, and never mention his son's name to him. Peace be to the living, as to the dead. Kitty, this changes our plans; we must all go to Cumberland—we cannot leave Roland thus!"

"Poor, poor Roland!" said my mother, through her tears. "And to think that father and son were not reconciled. But Roland forgives him now—oh yes; *now!*"

"It is not Roland we can censure," said my father, almost fiercely; "it is——but enough. We must hurry out of town as soon as we can: Roland will recover in the native air of his old ruins."

We went up to bed mournfully. "And so," thought I; "ends one grand object of my life!—I had hoped to have brought those two together. But, alas! what peacemaker like the grave!"

CHAPTER III.

My uncle did not leave his room for three days, but he was much closeted with a lawyer; and my father dropped some words which seemed to imply that the deceased had incurred debts, and that the poor Captain was making some charge on his small property. As Roland had said that he had seen the remains of his son, I took it, at first, for granted that we should attend a funeral, but no word of this was said. On the fourth day, Roland, in deep mourning, entered a hackney coach with the lawyer, and was absent about two hours. I did not doubt that he had thus quietly fulfilled the last mournful offices. On his return, he shut himself up again for the rest of the day, and would not see even my father. But the next morning he made his appearance as usual, and I even thought that he seemed more cheerful than I had yet known him—whether he played a part, or whether the worst was now over, and the grave was less cruel than uncertainty. On the following day, we all set out for Cumberland.

In the interval, Uncle Jack had been almost constantly at the house, and, to do him justice, he had seemed unaffectedly shocked at the calamity that had befallen Roland. There was, indeed, no want of heart in Uncle Jack, whenever you went straight at it; but it was hard to find if you took a circuitous route towards it through the pockets.

The worthy speculator had indeed much business to transact with my father before he left town. The *Anti-Publisher Society* had been set up, and it was through the obstetric aid of that fraternity that the Great Book was to be ushered into the world. The new journal, the *Literary Times*, was also far advanced—not yet out, but my father was fairly in for it. There were preparations for its *début* on a vast scale, and two or three gentlemen in black—one of whom looked like a lawyer, and another like a printer, and a third uncommonly like a Jew—called twice, with papers of a very formidable aspect. All these preliminaries settled, the last thing I heard Uncle Jack say, with a slap on my father's back, was, "Fame and fortune both made now!—you may go to sleep in safety, for you leave me wide awake. Jack Tibbets never sleeps!"

I had thought it strange that, since my abrupt exodus from Trevanion's house, no notice had been taken of any of us by himself or Lady Ellinor. But on the very eve of our departure, came a kind note from Trevanion to me, dated from his favorite country seat (accompanied by a present of some rare books to my father), in which he said briefly that there had been illness in his family, which had obliged him to leave town for a change of air, but that Lady Ellinor expected to call on my mother the next week. He had found amongst his books some curious works of the Middle Ages, amongst others a complete set of Cardan, which he knew my father would like to have, and so sent them. There was no allusion to what had passed between us.

In reply to this note, after due thanks on my father's part, who seized upon the Cardan (Lyons edition, 1663, ten volumes folio) as a silk-worm does upon a mulberry-leaf, I expressed our joint regrets that there was no hope of our seeing Lady Ellinor, as we were just leaving town. I should have added something on the loss my uncle had sustained, but my father thought that, since Roland shrank from any mention of his son, even by his nearest kindred, it would be his obvious wish not to parade his affliction beyond that circle.

And there had been illness in Trevanion's family! On whom had it fallen? I could

not rest satisfied with that general expression, and I took my answer myself to Trevanion's house, instead of sending it by the post. In reply to my inquiries, the porter said that all the family were expected at the end of the week; that he had heard both Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion had been rather poorly, but that they were now better. I left my note with orders to forward it; and my wounds bled afresh as I came away.

We had the whole coach to ourselves in our journey, and a silent journey it was, till we arrived at a little town about eight miles from my uncle's residence, to which we could only get through a cross-road. My uncle insisted on preceding us that night, and, though he had written, before we started, to announce our coming, he was fidgety lest the poor tower should not make the best figure it could; so he went alone, and we took our ease at our inn.

Betimes the next day we hired a fly-coach—for a chaise could never have held us and my father's books—and jogged through a labyrinth of villanous lanes, which no Marshal Wade had ever reformed from their primal chaos. But poor Mrs. Primmins and the canary-bird alone seemed sensible of the jolts; the former, who sat opposite to us, wedged amidst a medley of packages, all marked "Care, to be kept top uppermost" (why I know not, for they were but books, and whether they lay top or bottom it could not materially affect their value),—the former, I say, contrived to extend her arms over those *disjecta membra*, and, griping a window-sill with the right hand, and a window-sill with the left, kept her seat rampant, like the split eagle of the Austrian Empire—in fact, it would be well, nowadays, if the split eage were as firm as Mrs. Primmins! As for the canary, it never failed to respond, by an astonished chirp, to every "Gracious me!" and "Lord save us!" which the delve into a rut, or the bump out of it, sent forth from Mrs. Primmins's lips with all the emphatic dolor of the "Αε, αε!" in a Greek chorus.

But my father, with his broad hat over his brows, was in deep thought. The scenes of his youth were rising before him, and his memory went, smooth as a spirit's wing, over delve and bump. And my mother, who sat next him, had her arm on his shoulder and was watching his face jealously. Did she think that, in that thoughtful face, there was regret for the old love? Blanche, who had been very sad, and had wept much and quietly since they put on her the mourning, and told her that she had no brother (though she had no remembrance of the lost), began now to evince infantine curiosity and eagerness to catch the first peep of her father's beloved tower. And Blanche sat on my knee, and I shared her impatience. At last there came in view a church spire—a church—a plain square building near it, the parsonage (my father's old home)—a long straggling street of cottages and rude shops, with a better kind of house here and there—and in the hinder ground, a gray deformed mass of wall and ruin, placed on one of those eminences on which the Danes loved to pitch camp or build fort, with one high, rude, Anglo-Norman tower rising from the midst. Few trees were round it, and those either poplars or firs, save, as we approached, one mighty oak—integral and unscathed. The road now wound behind the parsonage, and up a steep ascent. Such a road!—the whole parish ought to have been flogged for it! If I had sent up a road like that, even on a map, to Dr. Herman, I should not have sat down in comfort for a week to come!

The fly-coach came to a full stop.

"Let us get out," cried I, opening the door, and springing to the ground to set the example.

Blanche followed, and my respected parents came next. But when Mrs. Primmins was about to heave herself into movement,

"*Papæ!*" said my father. "I think, Mrs. Primmins, you must remain in, to keep the books steady."

"Lord love you!" cried Mrs. Primmins, aghast.

"The subtraction of such a mass, or *moles*—supple and elastic as all flesh is, and fitting into the hard corners of the inert matter—such a subtraction, Mrs. Primmins, would leave a vacuum which no natural system, certainly no artificial organization, could sustain. There would be a regular dance of atoms, Mrs. Primmins; my books would fly here, there, on the floor, out of the window!

"'*Corporis officium est quoniam omnia deorsum.*'

The business of a body like yours, Mrs. Primmins, is to press all things down—to keep

them tight, as you will know one of these days —that is, if you will do me the favor to read Lucretius, and master that material philosophy, of which I may say, without flattery, my dear Mrs. Primmins, that you are a living illustration."

These, the first words my father had spoken since we set out from the inn, seemed to assure my mother that she need have no apprehension as to the character of his thoughts, for her brow cleared, and she said, laughing,

"Only look at poor Primmins, and then at that hill!"

"You may subtract Primmins, if you will be answerable for the remnant, Kitty. Only, I warn you, that it is against all the laws of physics."

So saying, he sprang lightly forward, and, taking hold of my arm, paused and looked round, and drew the loud free breath with which we draw native air.

"And yet," said my father, after that grateful and affectionate inspiration—"and yet, it must be owned, that a more ugly country one cannot see out of Cambridgeshire." *

"Nay," said I, "it is bold and large, it has a beauty of its own. Those immense, undulating, uncultivated, treeless tracts have surely their charm of wildness and solitude! And how they suit the character of the ruin! All is feudal there! I understand Roland better now."

"I hope to Heaven Cardan will come to no harm!" cried my father; "he is very handsomely bound; and he fitted beautifully just into the fleshiest part of that fidgety Primmins."

Blanche, meanwhile, had run far before us, and I followed fast. There were still the remains of that deep trench (surrounding the ruins on three sides, leaving a ragged hill-top at the fourth) which made the favorite fortification of all the Teutonic tribes. A causeway, raised on brick arches, now, however, supplied the place of the drawbridge, and the outer gate was but a mass of picturesque ruin. Entering into the courtyard or bailey, the old castle mound, from which justice had been dispensed, was in full view, rising higher than the broken walls around it, and partially overgrown with brambles. And there stood, comparatively whole, the Tower or Keep, and from its portals emerged the veteran owner.

His ancestors might have received us in more state, but certainly they could not have given us a warmer greeting. In fact, in his own domain, Roland appeared another man. His stiffness, which was a little repulsive to those who did not understand it, was all gone. He seemed less proud, precisely because he and his pride, on that ground, were on good terms with each other. How gallantly he extended—not his arm, in our modern Jack-and-Jill sort of fashion—but his right hand to my mother; how carefully he led her over "brake, bush, and scaur," through the low vaulted door, where a tall servant, who it was easy to see, had been a soldier—in the precise livery, no doubt, warranted by the heraldic colors (his stockings were red!)—stood upright as a sentry. And, coming into the hall, it looked absolutely cheerful—it took us by surprise. There was a great fire-place, and, though it was still summer, a great fire! It did not seem a bit too much, for the walls were stone, the lofty roof open to the rafters, while the windows were small and narrow, and so high and so deep sunk that one seemed in a vault. Nevertheless, I say the room looked sociable and cheerful—thanks principally to the fire, and partly to a very ingenious medley of old tapestry at one end, and matting at the other, fastened to the lower part of the walls, seconded by an arrangement of furniture which did credit to my uncle's taste for the picturesque. After we had looked about and admired to our heart's content, Roland took us—not up one of those noble staircases you see in the later manorial residences—but a little winding stone stair, into the rooms he had appropriated to his guests. There was first a small chamber, which he called my father's study—in truth, it would have done for any philosopher or saint who wished to shut out the world—and might have passed for the interior of such a column as the Stylites inhabited; for you must have climbed a ladder to have looked out of the window, and then the vision of no short-sighted man could have got over the interval in the wall made by the narrow casement, which, after all, gave no other prospect than a Cumberland sky, with an occasional rook in it.

* This certainly cannot be said of Cumberland generally, one of the most beautiful counties in Great Britain. But the immediate district to which Mr. Caxton's exclamation refers, if not ugly, is at least savage, bare, and rude.

But my father, I think I have said before, did not much care for scenery, and he looked round with great satisfaction upon the retreat assigned him.

"We can knock up shelves for your books in no time," said my uncle, rubbing his hands.

"It would be a charity," quoth my father, "for they have been very long in a recumbent position, and would like to stretch themselves, poor things. My dear Roland, this room is made for books—so round and so deep. I shall sit here like Truth in a well."

"And there is a room for you, sister, just out of it," said my uncle, opening a little, low, prison-like door into a charming room, for its window was low, and it had an iron balcony; "and out of that is the bedroom. For you, Pisistratus, my boy, I am afraid that it is soldier's quarters, indeed, with which you will have to put up. But never mind; in a day or two we shall make all worthy a general of your illustrious name—for he was a great general, Pisistratus the First—was he not, brother?"

"All tyrants are," said my father: "the knack of soldiering is indispensable to them."

"Oh, you may say what you please here!" said Roland, in high good-humor, as he drew me down stairs, still apologizing for my quarters, and so earnestly, that I made up my mind that I was to be put into an *oubliette*. Nor were my suspicions much dispelled on seeing that we had to leave the keep, and pick our way into what seemed to me a mere heap of rubbish, on the dexter side of the court. But I was agreeably surprised to find, amidst these wrecks, a room with a noble casement, commanding the whole country, and placed immediately over a plot of ground cultivated as a garden. The furniture was ample, though homely; the floors and walls well matted; and, altogether, despite the inconvenience of having to cross the courtyard to get to the rest of the house, and being wholly without the modern luxury of a bell, I thought that I could not be better lodged.

"But this is a perfect bower, my dear uncle! Depend on it, it was the bower-chamber of the Dames de Caxton—heaven rest them?"

"No," said my uncle, gravely; "I suspect it must have been the chaplain's room, for the chapel was to the right of you. An earlier chapel, indeed, formerly existed in the keep tower—for, indeed, it is scarcely a true keep without chapel, well, and hall. I can show you part of the roof of the first, and the two last are entire; the well is very curious, formed in the substance of the wall at one angle of the hall. In Charles the First's time, our ancestor lowered his only son down in a bucket, and kept him there six hours, while a Malignant mob was storming the tower. I need not say that our ancestor himself scorned to hide from such a rabble, for *he* was a grown man. The boy lived to be a sad spendthrift, and used the well for cooling his wine. He drank up a great many good acres."

"I should scratch him out of the pedigree, if I were you. But, pray, have you not discovered the proper chamber of that great Sir William, about whom my father is so shamefully sceptical?"

"To tell you a secret," answered the Captain, giving me a sly poke in the ribs, "I have put your father into it! There are the initial letters W. C. let into the cusp of the York rose, and the date, three years before the battle of Bosworth, over the chimney-piece."

I could not help joining my uncle's grim, low laugh at this characteristic pleasantry; and after I had complimented him on so judicious a mode of proving his point, I asked him how he could possibly have contrived to fit up the ruin so well, especially as he had scarcely visited it since his purchase.

"Why," said he, "some years ago, that poor fellow you now see as my servant, and who is gardener, bailiff, seneschal, butler, and anything else you can put him to, was sent out of the army on the invalid list. So I placed him here; and as he is a capital carpenter, and has had a very fair education, I told him what I wanted, and put by a small sum every year for repairs and furnishing. It is astonishing how little it cost me; for Bolt, poor fellow (that is his name), caught the right spirit of the thing, and most of the furniture (which you see is ancient and suitable), he picked up at different cottages and farm-houses in the neighborhood. As it is, however, we have plenty more rooms here and there—only, of late," continued my uncle, slightly changing color, "I had no money to spare. But come," he resumed, with an evident effort—"come and see my barrack: it is on the other side of the hall, and made out of what no doubt were the butteries."

We reached the yard and found the fly-coach

had just crawled to the door. My father's head was buried deep in the vehicle,—he was gathering up his packages, and sending out, oracle-like, various muttered objurgations and anathemas upon Mrs. Primmins and her vacuum; which Mrs. Primmins, standing by and making a lap with her apron to receive the packages and anathemas simultaneously, bore with the mildness of an angel, lifting up her eyes to heaven and murmuring something about "poor old bones." Though, as for Mrs. Primmins's bones, they had been myths these twenty years, and you might as soon have found a Plesiosaurus in the fat lands of Romney Marsh as a bone amidst those layers of flesh in which my poor father thought he had so carefully cottoned up his Cardan.

Leaving these parties to adjust matters between them, we stepped under the low doorway, and entered Roland's room. Oh, certainly Bolt *had* caught the spirit of the thing!—certainly he had penetrated down to the pathos that lay within the deeps of Roland's character. Buffon says "the style is the man;" there, the room was the man. That nameless, inexpressible, soldier-like, methodical neatness which belonged to Roland—that was the first thing that struck one—that was the general character of the whole. Then, in details, there, in stout oak shelves, were the books on which my father loved to jest his more imaginative brother,—there they were, Froissart, Barante, Joinville, the *Mort d'Arthur*, *Amadis of Gaul*, Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, a noble copy of Strutt's *Horda*, Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, Percy's *Reliques*, Pope's *Homer*, books on gunnery, archery, hawking, fortification—old chivalry and modern war together cheek by-jowl.

Old chivalry and modern war!—look to that tilting helmet with the tall Caxton crest, and look to that trophy near it, a French cuirass—and that old banner (a knight's pennon) surmounting those crossed bayonets. And over the chimney-piece there—bright, clean, and, I warrant you, dusted daily—are Roland's own sword, his holsters and pistols, yea, the saddle, pierced and lacerated, from which he had reeled when that leg—I gasped—I felt it all at a glance, and I stole softly to the spot, and, had Roland not been there, I could have kissed that sword as reverently as if it had been a Bayard's or a Sidney's.

My uncle was too modest to guess my emotion; he rather thought I had turned my face to conceal a smile at his vanity, and said, in a deprecating tone of apology—"It was all Bolt's doing, foolish fellow."

CHAPTER IV.

Our host regaled us with a hospitality that notably contrasted his economical thrifty habits in London. To be sure, Bolt had caught the great pike which headed the feast; and Bolt, no doubt, had helped to rear those fine chickens *ab ovo;* Bolt, I have no doubt, made that excellent Spanish omelette; and, for the rest, the products of the sheepwalk and the garden came in as volunteer auxiliaries—very different from the mercenary recruits by which those metropolitan *Condottieri*, the butcher and greengrocer, hasten the ruin of that melancholy commonwealth called "genteel poverty."

Our evening passed cheerfully; and Roland, contrary to his custom, was talker in chief. It was eleven o'clock before Bolt appeared with a lantern to conduct me through the courtyard to my dormitory among the ruins—a ceremony which, every night, shine or dark, he insisted upon punctiliously performing.

It was long before I could sleep—before I could believe that but so few days had elapsed since Roland heard of his son's death—that son whose fate had so long tortured him; and yet, never had Roland appeared so free from sorrow! Was it natural—was it effort? Several days passed before I could answer that question, and then not wholly to my satisfaction. Effort there was, or rather resolute systematic determination. At moments Roland's head drooped, his brows met, and the whole man seemed to sink. Yet these were only moments; he would rouse himself up, like a dozing charger at the sound of a trumpet, and shake off the creeping weight. But whether from the vigor of his determination, or from some aid in other trains of reflection, I could not but perceive that Roland's sadness really was less grave and bitter than it had been, or than it was natural to suppose. He seemed to transfer, daily, more and more, his affections from the dead to those around him, especially to Blanche and myself. He let it be seen that he

looked on me now as his lawful successor—as the future supporter of his name: he was fond of confiding to me all his little plans, and consulting me on them. He would walk with me around his domains (of which I shall say more hereafter),—point out, from every eminence we climbed, where the broad lands which his forefathers had owned stretched away to the horizon; unfold with tender hand the mouldering pedigree, and rest lingeringly on those of his ancestors who had held martial post, or had died on the field.

There was a crusader who had followed Richard to Ascalon; there was a knight who had fought at Agincourt; there was a cavalier (whose picture was still extant), with fair love-locks, who had fallen at Worcester—no doubt the same who had cooled his son in that well which the son devoted to more agreeable associations. But of all these worthies there was none whom my uncle, perhaps from the spirit of contradiction, valued like that apocryphal Sir William: and why? because, when the apostate Stanley turned the fortunes of the field at Bosworth, and when that cry of despair—"Treason! treason!" burst from the lips of the last Plantagenet, "amongst the faithless," this true soldier, "faithful found!" had fallen in that lion-rush which Richard made at his foe. "Your father tells me that Richard was a murderer and usurper," quoth my uncle. "Sir, that might be true or not; but it was not on the field of battle that his followers were to reason on the character of the master who trusted them, especially when a legion of foreign hirelings stood opposed to them. I would not have descended from that turncoat Stanley to be lord of all the lands the Earls of Derby can boast of. Sir, in loyalty, men fight and die for a grand principle and a lofty passion; and this brave Sir William was paying back to the last Plantagenet the benefits he had received from the first!"

"And yet it may be doubted," said I, maliciously, "whether William Caxton the printer did not—"

"Plague, pestilence, and fire seize William Caxton the printer; and his invention too!" cried my uncle barbarously. "When there were only a few books, at least they were good ones; and now they are so plentiful, all they do is to confound the judgment, unsettle the reason, drive the good books out of cultivation, and draw a ploughshare of innovation over every ancient landmark; seduce the women, womanize the men, upset states, thrones, and churches; rear a race of chattering, conceited coxcombs, who can always find books in plenty to excuse them from doing their duty; make the poor discontented, the rich crotchety and whimsical, refine away the stout old virtues into quibbles and sentiments! All imagination formerly was expended in noble action, adventure, enterprise, high deeds and aspirations; now a man can but be imaginative by feeding on the false excitement of passions he never felt, dangers he never shared; and he fritters away all there is of life to spare in him upon the fictitious love-sorrows of Bond Street and St. James's. Sir, chivalry ceased when the press rose! And to fasten upon me, as a forefather, out of all men who ever lived and sinned, the very man who has most destroyed what I most valued—who, by the Lord! with his cursed invention has well nigh got rid of respect for forefathers altogether—is a cruelty of which my brother had never been capable, if that printer's devil had not got hold of him!"

That a man in this blessed nineteenth century should be such a Vandal! and that my Uncle Roland should talk in a strain that Totila would have been ashamed of, within so short a time after my father's scientific and erudite oration on the Hygeiana of Books, was enough to make one despair of the progress of intellect and the perfectibility of our species. And I have no manner of doubt that, all the while, my uncle had a brace of books in his pockets, Robert Hall one of them! In truth, he had talked himself into a passion, and did not know what nonsense he was saying. But this explosion of Captain Roland's has shatttered the thread of my matter. Pouff! I must take breath and begin again!

Yes, in spite of my sauciness, the old soldier evidently took to me more and more. And, besides our critical examination of the property and the pedigree, he carried me with him on long excursions to distant villages, where some memorial of a defunct Caxton, a coat of arms, or an epitaph on a tombstone, might be still seen. And he made me pore over topographical works and county histories, (forgetful, Goth that he was, that for those very authorities he was indebted to the repudiated printer!) to find some ancedote of his be-

loved dead! In truth, the county for miles round bore the *vestigia* of those old Caxtons; their handwriting was on many a broken wall. And, obscure as they all were compared to that great operative of the Sanctuary at Westminster, whom my father clung to—still, that the yesterdays that had lighted them the way to dusty death had cast no glare on dishonored scutcheons seemed clear, from the popular respect and traditional affection in which I found that the name was still held in hamlet and homestead. It was pleasant to see the veneration with which this small hidalgo of some three hundred a-year was held, and the patriarchal affection with which he returned it. Roland was a man who would walk into a cottage, rest his cork leg on the hearth, and talk for the hour together upon all that lay nearest to the hearts of the owners. There is a peculiar spirit of aristocracy amongst agricultural peasants: they like old names and families; they identify themselves with the honors of a house, as if of its clan. They do not care so much for wealth as townsfolk and the middle class do; they have a pity, but a respectful one, for well-born poverty. And then this Roland, too—who would go and dine in a cookshop, and receive change for a shilling, and shun the ruinous luxury of a hack cabriolet—could be positively extravagant in his liberalities to those around him. He was altogether another being in his paternal acres. The shabby-genteel, half-pay captain, lost in the whirl of London, here luxuriated into a dignified ease of manner that Chesterfield might have admired. And, if to please is the true sign of politeness, I wish you could have seen the faces that smiled upon Captain Roland, as he walked down the village, nodding from side to side.

One day a frank, hearty, old woman, who had known Roland as a boy, seeing him lean on my arm, stopped us, as she said bluffly, to take a "geud luik" at me.

Fortunately I was stalwart enough to pass muster, even in the eyes of a Cumberland matron; and after a compliment at which Roland seemed much pleased, she said to me, but pointing to the Captain—

"Hegh, sir, now you ha the bra time before you; you maun een try and be as geud as *he*. And if life last, ye wull too—for there never waur a bad ane of that stock. Wi' heads kindly stup'd to the least, and lifted manfu' oop to the highest—that ye all war' sin ye came from the Ark. Blessins on the ould name—though little pelf goes with it—it sounds on the peur man's ear like a bit of gould!"

"Do you not see now," said Roland, as we turned away, "what we owe to a name, and what to our forefathers?—do you not see why the remotest ancestor has a right to our respect and consideration — for he was a parent? 'Honor your parents'—the law does not say, 'Honor your children?' If a child disgrace us, and the dead, and the sanctity of this great heritage of their virtues—*the name;*—if he does—" Roland stopped short, and added fervently, "But you are my heir now—I have no fear! What matter one foolish old man's sorrows?—the name, that property of generations, is saved, thank Heaven—the name!"

Now the riddle was solved, and I understood why, amidst all his natural grief for a son's loss, that proud father was consoled. For he was less himself a father than a son—son to the long dead. From every grave where a progenitor slept, he had heard a parent's voice. He could bear to be bereaved, if the forefathers were not dishonored. Roland was more than half a Roman—the son might still cling to his household affections, but the *lares* were a part of his religion.

CHAPTER V.

BUT I ought to be hard at work, preparing myself for Cambridge. The deuce!—how can I? The point in academical education on which I require most preparation is Greek composition. I come to my father, who, one might think, was at home enough in this. But rare indeed is it to find a great scholar who is a good teacher.

My dear father! if one is content to take you in your own way, there never was a more admirable instructor for the heart, the head, the principles, or the taste—when you have discovered that there is some one sore to be healed—one defect to be repaired: and you have rubbed your spectacles, and got your hand fairly into that recess between your frill and your waistcoat. But to go to you, cut and dry, monotonously, regularly,—book and exercise in hand—to see the mournful patience

with which you tear yourself from that great volume of Cardan in the very honeymoon of possession—and then to note those mild eyebrows gradually distend themselves into perplexed diagonals, over some false quantity or some barbarous collocation—till there steal forth that horrible "Papæ!" which means more on your lips than I am sure it ever did when Latin was a live language, and "Papæ!" a natural and unpedantic ejaculation!—no, I would sooner blunder through the dark by myself a thousand times, than light my rushlight at the lamp of that Phlegethonian "Papæ!"

And then my father would wisely and kindly, but wondrous slowly, erase three-fourths of one's pet verses, and intercalate others that one saw were exquisite, but could not exactly see why. And then one asked why; and my father shook his head in despair, and said—"But you ought to *feel* why!"

In short, scholarship to him was like poetry: he could no more teach it you than Pindar could have taught you how to make an ode. You breathed the aroma, but you could no more seize and analyze it, than, with the opening of your naked hand, you could carry off the scent of a rose. I soon left my father in peace to Cardan, and to the Great Book, which last, by the way, advanced but slowly. For Uncle Jack had now insisted on its being published in quarto, with illustrative plates; and those plates took an immense time, and were to cost an immense sum—but that cost was the affair of the Anti-Publisher Society. But how can I settle to work by myself? No sooner have I got into my room—*penitus ab orbe divisus*, as I rashly think—than there is a tap at the door. Now it is my mother, who is benevolently engaged upon making curtains to all the windows (a trifling superfluity that Bolt had forgotten or disdained), and who wants to know how the draperies are fashioned at Mr. Trevanion's: a pretence to have me near her, and see with her own eyes that I am not fretting; the moment she hears I have shut myself up in my room, she is sure that it is for sorrow. Now it is Bolt, who is making bookshelves for my father, and desires to consult me at every turn, especially as I have given him a Gothic design, which pleases him hugely. Now it is Blanche, whom, in an evil hour, I undertook to teach to draw, and who comes in on tiptoe, vowing she'll not disturb me, and sits so quiet that she fidgets me out of all patience. Now, and much more often, it is the Captain, who wants me to walk, to ride, to fish. And, by St. Hubert! (saint of the chase,) bright August comes—and there is moor-game on those barren wolds—and my uncle has given me the gun he shot with at my age—single-barrelled, flint lock—but you would not have laughed at it if you had seen the strange feats it did in Roland's hands—while in mine, I could always lay the blame on the flint lock! Time, in short, passed rapidly; and if Roland and I had our dark hours, we chased them away before they could settle—shot them on the wing as they got up.

Then, too, though the immediate scenery around my uncle's was so bleak and desolate, the country within a few miles was so full of objects of interest—of landscapes so poetically grand or lovely; and occasionally we coaxed my father from the Cardan, and spent whole days by the margin of some glorious lake.

Amongst these excursions, I made one by myself to that house in which my father had known the bliss and the pangs of that stern first-love which still left its scars fresh on my own memory. The house, large and imposing, was shut up—the Trevanions had not been there for years—the pleasure-grounds had been contracted into the smallest possible space. There was no positive decay or ruin—that Trevanion would never have allowed; but there was the dreary look of absenteeship everywhere. I penetrated into the house with the help of my card and half-a-crown. I saw that memorable boudoir—I could fancy the very spot in which my father had heard the sentence that had changed the current of his life. And when I returned home, I looked with new tenderness on my father's placid brow—and blessed anew that tender helpmate, who, in her patient love, had chased from it every shadow.

I had received one letter from Vivian a few days after our arrival. It had been re-directed from my father's house, at which I had given him my address. It was short, but seemed cheerful. He said, that he believed he had at last hit on the right way, and should keep to it—that he and the world were better friends than they had been—that the only way to keep friends with the world was to treat it as a tamed tiger, and have one hand on a crowbar while one fondled the beast with the other.

He enclosed me a bank-note, which somewhat more than covered his debt to me, and bade me pay him the surplus when he should claim it as a millionaire. He gave me no address in his letter, but it bore the post-mark of Godalming. I had the impertinent curiosity to look into an old topographical work upon Surrey, and in a supplemental itinerary I found this passage, "To the left of the beech-wood, three miles from Godalming, you catch a glimpse of the elegant seat of Francis Vivian, Esq." To judge by the date of the work, the said Francis Vivian might be the grandfather of my friend, his namesake. There could no longer be any doubt as to the parentage of this prodigal son.

The long vacation was now nearly over, and all his guests were to leave the poor Captain. In fact, we had made a considerable trespass on his hospitality. It was settled that I was to accompany my father and mother to their long-neglected *penates*, and start thence for Cambridge.

Our parting was sorrowful—even Mrs. Primmins wept as she shook hands with Bolt. But Bolt, an old soldier, was of course a lady's man. The brothers did not shake hands only—they fondly embraced, as brothers of that time of life rarely do nowadays, except on the stage. And Blanche, with one arm round my mother's neck and one round mine, sobbed in my ear,—"But I will be your little wife, I will." Finally, the fly-coach once more received us all—all but poor Blanche, and we looked round and missed her.

CHAPTER VI.

ALMA MATER! Alma Mater! New-fashioned folks, with their large theories of education, may find fault with thee. But a true Spartan mother thou art—hard and stern as the old matron who bricked up her son Pausanias, bringing the first stone to immure him; hard and stern, I say, to the worthless, but full of majestic tenderness to the worthy.

For a young man to go up to Cambridge (I say nothing of Oxford, knowing nothing thereof) merely as routine work, to lounge through three years to a degree among the οἱ πολλοι—for such an one, Oxford Street herself, whom the immortal Opium-Eater hath so direly apostrophized, is not a more careless and stony-hearted mother. But for him who will read, who will work, who will seize the rare advantages proffered, who will select his friends judiciously—yea, out of that vast ferment of young idea in its lusty vigor, choose the good and reject the bad—there is plenty to make those three years rich with fruit imperishable—three years nobly spent, even though one must pass over the Ass's Bridge to get into the Temple of Honor.

Important changes in the Academical system have been recently announced, and honors are henceforth to be accorded to the successful disciples in moral and natural sciences. By the side of the old throne of Mathesis, they have placed two very useful *fauteuils à la Voltaire*. I have no objection; but, in those three years of life, it is not so much the thing learned, as the steady perseverance in learning something that is excellent.

It was fortunate, in one respect, for me that I had seen a little of the real world—the metropolitan, before I came to that mimic one—the cloistral. For what were called pleasures in the last, and which might have allured me, had I come fresh from school, had no charm for me now. Hard drinking and high play, a certain mixture of coarseness and extravagance, made the fashion among the idle when I was at the university, *consule Planco*—when Wordsworth was master of Trinity: it may be altered now.

But I had already outlived such temptations, and so, naturally, I was thrown out of the socity of the idle, and somewhat into that of the laborious.

Still, to speak frankly, I had no longer the old pleasure in books. If my acquaintance with the great world had destroyed the temptation to puerile excesses, it had also increased my constitutional tendency to practical action. And, alas! in spite of all the benefit I had derived from Robert Hall, there were times when memory was so poignant that I had no choice but to rush from the lonely room haunted by tempting phantoms too dangerously fair, and sober down the fever of the heart by some violent bodily fatigue. The ardor which belongs to early youth, and which it best dedicates to knowledge, had been charmed prematurely to shrines less severely sacred. Therefore though I labored, it was

with that full *sense of labor* which (as I found at a much later period of life) the truly triumphant student never knows. Learning—that marble image—warms into life, not at the toil of the chisel, but the worship of the sculptor. The mechanical workman finds but the voiceless stone.

At my uncle's, such a thing as a newspaper rarely made its appearance. At Cambridge, even among reading men, the newspapers had their due importance. Politics ran high; and I had not been three days at Cambridge before I heard Trevanion's name. Newspapers, therefore, had their charms for me. Trevanion's prophecy about himself seemed about to be fulfilled. There were rumors of changes in the Cabinet. Trevanion's name was bandied to and fro, struck from praise to blame, high and low, as a shuttlecock. Still the changes were not made, and the Cabinet held firm. Not a word in the *Morning Post*, under the head of *fashionable intelligence*, as to rumors that would have agitated me more than the rise and fall of governments—no hint of "the speedy nuptials of the daughter and sole heiress of a distinguished and wealthy commoner:" only now and then, in enumerating the circle of brilliant guests at the house of some party chief, I gulped back the heart that rushed to my lips, when I saw the names of Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion.

But amongst all that prolific progeny of the periodical press—remote offspring of my great namesake and ancestor (for I hold the faith of my father)—where was the *Literary Times?*—what had so long retarded its promised blossoms? Not a leaf in the shape of advertisements had yet emerged from its mother earth. I hoped from my heart that the whole thing was abandoned, and would not mention it in my letters home, lest I should revive the mere idea of it. But, in default of the *Literary Times*, there did appear a new journal, a daily journal, too; a tall, slender, and meagre stripling, with a vast head, by way of prospectus, which protruded itself for three weeks successively at the top of the leading article;—with a fine and subtle body of paragraphs;—and the smallest legs, in the way of advertisements, that any poor newspaper ever stood upon! And yet this attenuated journal had a plump and plethoric title, a title that smacked of turtle and venison; an aldermanic, portly, grandiose, Falstaffian title—it was called THE CAPITALIST. And all those fine, subtle paragraphs were larded out with recipes how to make money. There was an El Dorado in every sentence. To believe that Paper, you would think no man had ever yet found a proper return for his pounds, shillings, and pence. You would turn up your nose at twenty per cent. There was a great deal about Ireland—not her wrongs, thank Heaven! but her fisheries: a long inquiry what had become of the pearls for which Britain was once so famous: a learned disquisition upon certain lost gold mines now happily re-discovered; a very ingenious proposition to turn London smoke into manure, by a new chemical process: recommendations to the poor to hatch chickens in ovens like the ancient Egyptians: agricultural schemes for sowing the waste lands in England with onions, upon the system adopted near Bedford—net produce one hundred pounds an acre. In short, according to that paper, every rood of ground might well maintain its man, and every shilling be like Hobson's money-bag, "the fruitful parent of a hundred more." For three days, at the newspaper room of the Union Club, men talked of this journal; some pished, some sneered, some wondered: till an ill-natured mathematician, who had just taken his degree, and had spare time on his hands, sent a long letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, showing up more blunders, in some article to which the editor of *The Capitalist* had specially invited attention, than would have paved the whole island of Laputa. After that time, not a soul read *The Capitalist*. How long it dragged on its existence I know not; but it certainly did not die of a *maladie de langueur*.

Little thought I, when I joined in the laugh against *The Capitalist*, that I ought rather to have followed it to its grave, in black crape and weepers,—unfeeling wretch that I was! But, like a poet, O *Capitalist!* thou wert not discovered and appreciated, and prized, and mourned, till thou wert dead and buried, and the bill came in for thy monument!

The first term of my college life was just expiring, when I received a letter from my mother, so agitated, so alarming—at first reading so unintelligible—that I could only see that some great misfortune had befallen us; and I stopped short and dropped on my knees to

pray for the life and health of those whom that misfortune more specially seemed to menace; and then—and then, towards the end of the last blurred sentence, read twice, thrice, over—I could cry, "Thank Heaven, thank Heaven! it is only, then, money after all!"

PART ELEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE next day, on the outside of the Cambridge Telegraph, there was one passenger who ought to have impressed his fellow-travellers with a very respectful idea of his lore in the dead languages; for not a single syllable, in a live one, did he vouchsafe to utter from the moment he ascended that "bad eminence," to the moment in which he regained his mother earth. "Sleep," says honest Sancho, "covers a man better than a cloak." I am ashamed of thee, honest Sancho! thou art a sad plagiarist; for Tibullus said pretty nearly the same thing before thee,—

"Te somnus fusco velavit amictu." *

But is not silence as good a cloak as sleep?—does it not wrap a man round with as offuse and impervious a fold? Silence—what a world it covers!—what busy schemes—what bright hopes and dark fears—what ambition, or what despair! Do you ever see a man in any society sitting mute for hours, and not feel an uneasy curiosity to penetrate the wall he thus builds up between others and himself? Does he not interest you far more than the brilliant talker at your left—the airy wit at your right, whose shafts fall in vain on the sullen barrier of the silent man! Silence, dark sister of Nox and Erebus, how, layer upon layer, shadow upon shadow, blackness upon blackness, thou stretchest thyself from hell to heaven, over thy two chosen haunts—man's heart and the grave!

So, then, wrapped in my great-coat and my silence, I performed my journey; and on the evening of the second day I reached the old-fashioned brick house. How shrill on my ears sounded the bell! How strange and ominous to my impatience seemed the light gleaming across the windows of the hall! How my heart beat as I watched the face of the servant who opened the gate to my summons!

"All well?" cried I.

"All well, sir," answered the servant, cheerfully. "Mr. Squills, indeed, is with master, but I don't think there is anything the matter."

But now my mother appeared at the threshold, and I was in her arms.

"Sisty, Sisty!—my dear, dear soul—beggared, perhaps—and my fault—mine."

"Yours!—come into this room, out of hearing—your fault?"

"Yes—yes!—for if I had had no brother, or if I had not been led away,—if I had, as I ought, entreated poor Austin not to"—

"My dear, dearest mother, *you* accuse yourself for what, it seems, was my uncle's misfortune—I am sure not even his fault! (I made a gulp *there*.) No, lay the fault on the right shoulders—the defunct shoulders of that horrible progenitor, William Caxton the printer, for, though I don't yet know the particulars of what has happened, I will lay a wager it is connected with that fatal invention of printing. Come, come—my father is well, is he not?"

"Yes, thank Heaven."

"And I too, and Roland, and little Blanche! Why, then, you are right to thank Heaven, for your true treasures are untouched. But sit down and explain, pray."

"I cannot explain. I do not understand anything more than that he, my brother,—

* Tibullus, iii. 4, 55.

mine!—has involved Austin in—in"—(a fresh burst of tears).

I comforted, scolded, laughed, preached, and adjured in a breath; and then, drawing my mother gently on, entered my father's study.

At the table was seated Mr. Squills, pen in hand, and a glass of his favorite punch by his side. My father was standing on the hearth, a shade more pale, but with a resolute expression on his countenance, which was new to its indolent thoughtful mildness. He lifted his eyes as the door opened, and then, putting his finger to his lips, as he glanced towards my mother, he said gaily, "No great harm done. Don't believe her! Women always exaggerate, and make realities of their own bugbears: it is the vice of their lively imaginations, as Wierus has clearly shown in accounting for the marks, moles, and hare lips which they inflict upon their innocent infants before they are even born. My dear boy," added my father, as I here kissed him and smiled in his face, "I thank you for that smile! God bless you!" He wrung my hand, and turned a little aside.

"It is a great comfort," renewed my father, after a short pause, "to know, when a misfortune happens, that it could not be helped. Squills has just discovered that I have no bump of cautiousness; so that, craniologically speaking, if I had escaped one imprudence, I should certainly have run my head against another."

"A man with your development is made to be taken in," said Mr. Squills, consolingly.

"Do you hear that, my own Kitty? and have you the heart to blame Jack any longer—a poor creature cursed with a bump that would take in the Stock Exchange? And can any one resist his bump, Squills?"

"Impossible!" said the surgeon authoritatively.

"Sooner or later it must involve him in its airy meshes—eh, Squills? entrap him into its fatal cerebral cell. There his fate waits him, like the ant-lion in its pit."

"Too true," quoth Squills. "What a phrenological lecturer you would have made!"

"Go, then, my love," said my father, "and lay no blame but on this melancholy cavity of mine, where cautiousness—is not! Go, and let Sisty have some supper; for Squills says that he has a fine development of the mathematical organs, and we want his help. We are hard at work on figures, Pisistratus."

My mother looked broken-hearted, and, obeying submissively, stole to the door without a word. But as she reached the threshold she turned round, and beckoned to me to follow her.

I whispered my father, and went out. My mother was standing in the hall, and I saw by the lamp that she had dried her tears, and that her face, though very sad, was more composed.

"Sisty," she said, in a low voice which struggled to be firm, "promise me that you will tell me all—the worst, Sisty. They keep it from me, and that is my hardest punishment; for when I don't know all that he—that Austin suffers, it seems to me as if I had lost his heart. Oh, Sisty! my child, my child, don't fear me! I shall be happy, whatever befalls us, if I once get back my privilege—my privilege, Sisty, to comfort, to share!—do you understand me?"

"Yes, indeed, my mother! And with your good sense, and clear woman's wit, if you will but feel how much we want them, you will be the best counsellor we could have. So never fear; you and I will have no secrets."

My mother kissed me, and went away with a less heavy step.

As I re-entered, my father came across the room and embraced me.

"My son," he said, in a faltering voice, "if your modest prospects in life are ruined"—

"Father, father, can you think of me at such a moment! Me!—Is it possible to ruin the young, and strong, and healthy! Ruin me, with these thews and sinews!—ruin me, with the education you have given me—thews and sinews of the mind! Oh no! there, Fortune is harmless! And you forget, sir,—the saffron bag!"

Squills leapt up, and, wiping his eyes with one hand, gave me a sounding slap on the shoulder with the other.

"I am proud of the care I took of your infancy, Master Caxton. That comes of strengthening the digestive organs in early childhood. Such sentiments are a proof of magnificent ganglions in a perfect state of order. When a man's tongue is as smooth as I am sure yours is, he slips through misfortune like an eel."

I laughed outright, my father smiled faintly: and, seating myself, I drew towards me a paper filled with Squills' memoranda, and said, "Now to find the unknown quantity. What on earth

is this? 'Supposed value of books, £750.' Oh, father! this is impossible. I was prepared for anything but that. Your books—they are your life!"

"Nay," said my father; "after all, they are the offending party in this case, and so ought to be the principal victims. Besides, I believe I know most of them by heart. But, in truth, we are only entering all our effects, to be sure (added my father proudly) that, come what may, we are not dishonored."

"Humor him," whispered Squills; "we will save the books." Then he added aloud, as he laid finger and thumb on my pulse, "One, two, three, about seventy—capital pulse—soft and full—he can bear the whole: let us administer it."

My father nodded—"Certainly. But, Pisistratus, we must manage your dear mother. Why she should think of blaming herself, because poor Jack took wrong ways to enrich us, I cannot understand. But as I have had occasion before to remark, Sphinx is a noun feminine."

My poor father! that was a vain struggle for thy wonted innocent humor. The lips quivered.

Then the story came out. It seems that, when it was resolved to undertake the publication of the *Literary Times*, a certain number of shareholders had been got together by the indefatigable energies of Uncle Jack; and in the deed of association and partnership, my father's name figured conspicuously as the holder of a fourth of this joint property. If in this my father had committed some imprudence, he had at least done nothing that, according to the ordinary calculations of a secluded student, could become ruinous. But, just at the time when we were in the hurry of leaving town, Jack had represented to my father that it might be necessary to alter a little the plan of the paper; and, in order to allure a larger circle of readers, touch somewhat on the more vulgar news and interests of the day. A change of plan might involve a change of title; and he suggested to my father the expediency of leaving the smooth hands of Mr. Tibbets altogether unfettered, as to the technical name and precise form of the publication. To this my father had unwittingly assented, on hearing that the other shareholders would do the same. Mr. Peck, a printer of considerable opulence, and highly respectable name, had been found to advance the sum necessary for the publication of the earlier numbers, upon the guarantee of the said act of partnership and the additional security of my father's signature to a document, authorizing Mr. Tibbets to make any change in the form or title of the periodical that might be judged advisable, concurrent with the consent of the other shareholders.

Now it seems that Mr. Peck had, in his previous conferences with Mr. Tibbets, thrown much cold water on the idea of the *Literary Times*, and had suggested something that should "catch the monied public,"—the fact being, as was afterwards discovered, that the printer, whose spirit of enterprise was congenial to Uncle Jack's, had shares in three or four speculations, to which he was naturally glad of an opportunity to invite the attention of the public. In a word, no sooner was my poor father's back turned, than the *Literary Times* was dropped incontinently, and Mr. Peck and Mr. Tibbets began to concentrate their luminous notions into that brilliant and comet-like apparition which ultimately blazed forth under the title of *The Capitalist*.

From this change of enterprise the more prudent and responsible of the original shareholders had altogether withdrawn. A majority, indeed, were left; but the greater part of those were shareholders of that kind most amenable to the influence of Uncle Jack, and willing to be shareholders in anything, since as yet they were possessors of nothing.

Assured of my father's responsibility, the adventurous Peck put plenty of spirit into the first launch of *The Capitalist*. All the walls were placarded with its announcements; circular advertisements ran from one end of the kingdom to the other. Agents were engaged, correspondents levied *en masse*. The invasion of Xerxes on the Greeks was not more munificently provided for than that of *The Capitalist* upon the credulity and avarice of mankind.

But as Providence bestows upon fishes the instrument of fins, whereby they balance and direct their movements, however rapid and erratic, through the pathless deeps; so to the cold-blooded creatures of our own species—that may be classed under the genus MONEY-MAKERS—the same protective power accords the fin-like properties of prudence and caution,

wherewith your true money-getter buoys and guides himself majestically through the great seas of speculation. In short, the fishes the net was cast for were all scared from the surface at the first splash. They came round and smelt at the mesh with their sharp bottle-noses, and then, plying those invaluable fins, made off as fast as they could—plunging into the mud—hiding themselves under rocks and coral banks. Metaphor apart, the capitalists buttoned up their pockets, and would have nothing to say to their namesake.

Not a word of this change, so abhorrent to all the notions of poor Augustine Caxton, had been breathed to him by Peck or Tibbets. He ate, and slept, and worked at the Great Book, occasionally wondering why he had not heard of the advent of the *Literary Times*, unconscious of all the awful responsibilities which *The Capitalist* was entailing on him;—knowing no more of *The Capitalist* than he did of the last loan of the Rothschilds.

Difficult was it for all other human nature, save my father's, not to breathe an indignant anathema on the scheming head of the brother-in-law who had thus violated the most sacred obligations of trust and kindred, and so entangled an unsuspecting recluse. But, to give even Jack Tibbets his due, he had firmly convinced himself that the *The Capitalist* would make my father's fortune; and if he did not announce to him the strange and anomalous development into which the original sleeping chrysalis of the *Literary Times* had taken portentous wing, it was purely and wholly in the knowledge that my father's "prejudices," as he termed them, would stand in the way of his becoming a Crœsus. And, in fact, Uncle Jack had believed so heartily in his own project, that he had put himself thoroughly into Mr. Peck's power, signed bills in his own name to some fabulous amount, and was actually now in the Fleet, whence his penitential and despairing confession was dated, arriving simultaneously with a short letter from Mr. Peck, wherein that respectable printer apprised my father that he had continued, at his own risk, the publication of *The Capitalist*, as far as a prudent care for his family would permit; that he need not say that a new daily journal was a very vast experiment; that the expense of such a paper as *The Capitalist* was immeasurably greater than that of a mere literary periodical, as originally suggested; and that now, being constrained to come upon the shareholders for the sums he had advanced, amounting to several thousands, he requested my father to settle with him immediately—delicately implying that Mr. Caxton himself might settle as he could with the other shareholders, most of whom, he grieved to add, he had been misled by Mr. Tibbets into believing to be men of substance, when in reality they were men of straw.

Nor was this all the evil. The "Great Anti-Bookseller Publishing Society,"—which had maintained a struggling existence—evinced by advertisements of sundry forthcoming works of solid interest and enduring nature, wherein, out of a long list, amidst a pompous array of "Poems;" "Dramas not intended for the Stage;" "Essays by Phileutheros, Philanthropos, Philopolis, Philodemus, and Philalethes," stood prominently forth, "The History of Human Error, Vols. I. and II., quarto, with illustrations,"—the "Anti-Bookseller Society," I say, that had hitherto evinced nascent and budding life by these exfoliations from its slender stem, died of a sudden blight, the moment its sun, in the shape of Uncle Jack, set in the Cimmerian regions of the Fleet; and a polite letter from another printer (O William Caxton, William Caxton !—fatai progenitor !) informing my father of this event, stated complimentarily that it was to him, "as the most respectable member of the Association," that the said printer would be compelled to look for expenses incurred, not only in the very costly edition of the "History of Human Error," but for those incurred in the print and paper devoted to "Poems," "Dramas not intended for the Stage," "Essays by Phileutheros, Philanthropos, Philopolis, Philodemus, and Philalethes," with sundry other works, no doubt of a very valuable nature, but in which a considerable loss, in a pecuniary point of view, must be necessarily expected.

I own that, as soon as I had mastered the above agreeable facts, and ascertained from Mr. Squills that my father really did seem to have rendered himself legally liable to these demands, I leant back in my chair, stunned and bewildered.

"So you see," said my father, "that as yet we are contending with monsters in the dark—in the dark all monsters look larger and uglier.

Even Augustus Cæsar, though certainly he had never scrupled to make as many ghosts as suited his convenience, did not like the chance of a visit from them, and never sat alone *in tenebris*. What the amount of the sums claimed from me may be, we know not; what may be gained from the other shareholders is equally obscure and undefined. But the first thing to do is to get poor Jack out of prison."

"Uncle Jack out of prison!" exclaimed I: "surely, sir, that is carrying forgiveness too far."

"Why, he would not have been in prison if I had not been so blindly forgetful of his weakness, poor man! I ought to have known better. But my vanity misled me; I must needs publish a great book, as if (said Mr. Caxton, looking round the shelves) there were not great books enough in the world! I must needs, too, think of advancing and circulating knowledge in the form of a journal—I, who had not knowledge enough of the character of my own brother-in-law to keep myself from ruin! Come what will, I should think myself the meanest of men to let that poor creature, whom I ought to have considered as a monomaniac, rot in prison, because I, Austin Caxton, wanted common sense. And (concluded my father resolutely) he is your mother's brother, Pisistratus. I should have gone to town at once; but, hearing that my wife had written to you, I waited till I could leave her to the companionship of hope and comfort—two blessings that smile upon every mother in the face of a son like you. To-morrow I go."

"Not a bit of it," said Mr. Squills, firmly; "as your medical adviser, I forbid you to leave the house for the next six days."

CHAPTER II.

"SIR," continued Mr. Squills, biting off the end of a cigar which he pulled from his pocket, "you concede to me that it is a very important business on which you propose to go to London."

"Of that there is no doubt," replied my father.

"And the doing of business well or ill entirely depends upon the habit of body!" cried Mr. Squills, triumphantly. "Do you know, Mr. Caxton, that while you are looking so calm, and talking so quietly—just on purpose to sustain your son and delude your wife—do you know that your pulse, which is naturally little more than sixty, is nearly a hundred? Do you know, sir, that your mucous membranes are in a state of high irritation, apparent by the *papillæ* at the tip of your tongue? And if, with a pulse like this, and a tongue like that, you think of settling money matters with a set of sharp-witted tradesmen, all I can say is, that you are a ruined man."

"But"—began my father.

"Did not Squire Rollick," pursued Mr. Squills—"Squire Rollick, the hardest head at a bargain I know of—did not Squire Rollick sell that pretty little farm of his, Scranny Holt, for thirty per cent. below its value? And what was the cause, sir?—the whole county was in amaze!—what was the cause, but an incipient simmering attack of the yellow jaundice, which made him take a gloomy view of human life, and the agricultural interest? On the other hand, did not Lawyer Cool, the most prudent man in the three kingdoms—Lawyer Cool, who was so methodical, that all the clocks in the country were set by his watch—plunge one morning head over heels into a frantic speculation for cultivating the bogs in Ireland (his watch did not go right for the next three months, which made our whole shire an hour in advance of the rest of England!). And what was the cause of that nobody knew, till I was called in, and found the cerebral membrane in a state of acute irritation, probably just in the region of his acquisitiveness and ideality. No, Mr. Caxton, you will stay at home, and take a soothing preparation I shall send you, of lettuce leaves and marsh-mallows. But I," continued Squills, lighting his cigar, and taking two determined whiffs—"but *I* will go up to town and settle the business for you, and take with me this young gentleman, whose digestive functions are just in a state to deal safely with those horrible elements of dyspepsia—the L. S. D."

As he spoke, Mr. Squills set his foot significantly upon mine.

"But," resumed my father mildly, "though I thank you very much, Squills, for your kind offer, I do not recognize the necessity of accepting it. I am not so bad a philosopher as

you seem to imagine; and the blow I have received has not so deranged my physical organization as to render me unfit to transact my affairs."

"Hum!" grunted Squills, starting up and seizing my father's pulse; "ninety-six—ninety-six if a beat! And the tongue, sir!"

"Pshaw!" quoth my father, "you have not even seen my tongue?"

"No need of that, I know what it is by the state of the eyelids—tip scarlet, sides rough as a nutmeg-grater!"

"Pshaw!" again said my father, this time impatiently.

"Well," said Squills, solemnly, "it is my duty to say, (here my mother entered, to tell me that supper was ready,) and I say it to you, Mrs. Caxton, and to you, Mr. Pisistratus Caxton, as the parties most nearly interested, that if you, sir, go to London upon this matter, I'll not answer for the consequences."

"Oh! Austin, Austin," cried my mother, running up and throwing her arms round my father's neck; while I, little less alarmed by Squill's serious tone and aspect, represented strongly the inutility of Mr. Caxton's personal interference at the present moment. All he could do on arriving in town would be to put the matter into the hands of a good lawyer, and that we could do for him; it would be time enough to send for him when the extent of the mischief done was more clearly ascertained. Meanwhile Squills griped my father's pulse, and my mother hung on his neck.

"Ninety-six—ninety-seven!" groaned Squills in a hollow voice.

"I don't believe it!" cried my father, almost in a passion—"never better nor cooler in my life."

"And the tongue—look at his tongue, Mrs. Caxton—a tongue, ma'am, so bright that you could see to read by it!"

"Oh! Austin, Austin!"

"My dear, it is not my tongue that is in fault, I assure you," said my father, speaking through his teeth; "and the man knows no more of my tongue than he does of the Mysteries of Eleusis."

"Put it out then," exclaimed Squills, "and if it be not as I say, you have my leave to go to London, and throw your whole fortune into the two great pits you have dug for it. Put it out!"

"Mr. Squills!" said my father, coloring—"Mr. Squills, for shame!"

"Dear, dear, Austin! your hand is so hot—you are feverish, I am sure."

"Not a bit of it."

"But, sir, only just gratify Mr. Squills," said I, coaxingly.

"There, there!" said my father, fairly baited into submission, and shyly exhibiting for a moment the extremest end of the vanquished organ of eloquence.

Squills darted forward his lynx-like eyes. "Red as a lobster, and rough as a gooseberry-bush!" cried Squills, in a tone of savage joy.

CHAPTER III.

How was it possible for one poor tongue, so reviled and persecuted, so humbled, insulted, and triumphed over—to resist three tongues in league against it?

Finally, my father yielded, and Squills, in high spirits, declared that he would go to supper with me, to see that I ate nothing that could tend to discredit his reliance on my system. Leaving my mother still with her Austin, the good surgeon then took my arm, and, as soon as we were in the next room, shut the door carefully, wiped his forehead, and said—"I think we have saved him!"

"Would it really, then, have injured my father so much?"

"So much!—why, you foolish young man, don't you see that, with his ignorance of business, where he himself is concerned—though, for any other one's business, neither Rollick nor Cool has a better judgment—and with his d—d Quixotic spirit of honor worked up into a state of excitement, he would have rushed to Mr. Tibbets, and exclaimed, 'How much do you owe? there it is!'—settled in the same way with these printers, and come back without a sixpence; whereas you and I can look coolly about us, and reduce the inflammation to the minimum!"

"I see, and thank you heartily, Squills."

"Besides," said the surgeon, with more feeling, "your father has really been making a noble effort over himself. He suffers more than you would think—not for himself (for I do believe that, if he were alone in the world,

he would be quite contented if he could save fifty pounds a-year and his books), but for your mother and yourself; and a fresh access of emotional excitement, all the nervous anxiety of a journey to London on such a business, might have ended in a paralytic or epileptic affection. Now we have him here snug; and the worst news we can give him will be better than what he will make up his mind for. But you don't eat."

"Eat! How can I? My poor father!"

"The effect of grief upon the gastric juices, through the nervous system, is very remarkable," said Mr. Squills, philosophically, and helping himself to a broiled bone; "it increases the thirst, while it takes away hunger. No—don't touch port!—heating! Sherry and water."

CHAPTER IV.

THE house-door had closed upon Mr. Squills—that gentleman having promised to breakfast with me the next morning, so that we might take the coach from our gate—and I remained alone, seated by the supper-table, and revolving all I had heard, when my father walked in.

"Pisistratus," said he gravely, and looking round him, "your mother!—suppose the worst—your first care, then, must be to try and secure something for her. You and I are men—we can never want, while we have health of mind and body; but a woman—and if anything happens to me—"

My father's lip writhed as it uttered these brief sentences.

"My dear, dear father!" said I, suppressing my tears with difficulty, "all evils, as you yourself said, look worse by anticipation. It is impossible that your whole fortune can be involved. The newspaper did not run many weeks; and only the first volume of your work is printed. Besides, there must be other shareholders who will pay their quota. Believe me, I feel sanguine as to the result of my embassy. As for my poor mother, it is not the loss of fortune that will wound her—depend on it, she thinks very little of that; it is the loss of your confidence."

"My confidence!"

"Ah yes! tell her all your fears, as your hopes. Do not let your affectionate pity exclude her from one corner of your heart."

"It is that—it is *that*, Austin,—my husband—my joy—my pride—my soul—my all!" cried a soft, broken voice.

My mother had crept in, unobserved by us.

My father looked at us both, and the tears which had before stood in his eyes forced their way. Then opening his arms—into which his Kitty threw herself joyfully—he lifted those moist eyes upward, and, by the movement of his lips, I saw that he thanked God.

I stole out of the room. I felt that those two hearts should be left to beat and to blend alone. And from that hour, I am convinced that Augustine Caxton acquired a stouter philosophy than that of the stoics. The fortitude that concealed pain was no longer needed, for the pain was no longer felt.

CHAPTER V.

MR. SQUILLS and I performed our journey without adventure, and, as we were not alone on the coach, with little conversation. We put up at a small inn at the city, and the next morning I sallied forth to see Trevanion—for we agreed that he would be the best person to advise us. But, on arriving at St. James's Square, I had the disappointment of hearing that the whole family had gone to Paris three days before, and were not expected to return till the meeting of Parliament.

This was a sad discouragement, for I had counted much on Trevanion's clear head, and that extraordinary range of accomplishment in all matters of business—all that related to practical life—which my old patron pre-eminently possessed. The next thing would be to find Trevanion's lawyer (for Trevanion was one of those men whose solicitors are sure to be able and active). But the fact was that he left so little to lawyers, that he had never had occasion to communicate with one since I had known him; and I was therefore in ignorance of the very name of his solicitor; nor could the porter, who was left in charge of the house, enlighten me. Luckily, I bethought myself of Sir Sedley Beaudesert, who could scarcely fail to give me the information required, and who,

at all events, might recommend to me some other lawyer. So to him I went.

I found Sir Sedley at breakfast with a young gentleman who seemed about twenty. The good baronet was delighted to see me; but I thought it was with a little confusion, rare to his cordial ease, that he presented me to his cousin, Lord Castleton. It was a name familiar to me, though I had never before met its patrician owner.

The Marquis of Castleton was indeed a subject of envy to young idlers, and afforded a theme of interest to gray-beard politicians. Often had I heard of "that lucky fellow Castleton," who, when of age, would step into one of those colossal fortunes which would realize the dreams of Aladdin—a fortune that had been out to nurse since his minority. Often had I heard graver gossips wonder whether Castleton would take any active part in public life—whether he would keep up the family influence. His mother (still alive) was a superior woman, and had devoted herself, from his childhood, to supply a father's loss, and fit him for his great position. It was said that he was clever—had been educated by a tutor of great academic distinction, and was reading for a double first class at Oxford. This young marquis was indeed the head of one of those few houses still left in England that retain feudal importance. He was important, not only from his rank and his vast fortune, but from an immense circle of powerful connections; from the ability of his two predecessors, who had been keen politicians and cabinet-ministers; from the *prestige* they had bequeathed to his name; from the peculiar nature of his property, which gave him the returning interest in no less than six parliamentary seats in Great Britain and Ireland—besides the indirect ascendancy which the head of the Castletons had always exercised over many powerful and noble allies of that princely house. I was not aware that he was related to Sir Sedley, whose world of action was so remote from politics; and it was with some surprise that I now heard that announcement, and certainly with some interest that I, perhaps from the verge of poverty, gazed on this young heir of fabulous El Dorados.

It was easy to see that Lord Castleton had been brought up with a careful knowledge of his future greatness, and its serious responsibilities. He stood immeasurably aloof from all the affectations common to the youth of minor patricians. He had not been taught to value himself on the cut of a coat, or the shape of a hat. His world was far above St. James's-street and the clubs. He was dressed plainly, though in a style peculiar to himself—a white neckcloth (which was not at that day quite so uncommon for morning use as it is now), trousers without straps, thin shoes and gaiters. In his manner there was nothing of the supercilious apathy which characterizes the dandy introduced to some one whom he doubts if he can nod to from the bow-window at White's—none of such vulgar coxcombries had Lord Castleton; and yet a young gentleman more emphatically coxcomb it was impossible to see. He had been told, no doubt, that, as the head of a house which was almost in itself a party in the state, he should be bland and civil to all men; and this duty being grafted upon a nature singularly cold and unsocial, gave to his politeness something so stiff, yet so condescending, that it brought the blood to one's cheek—though the momentary anger was counterbalanced by a sense of the almost ludicrous contrast between this gracious majesty of deportment, and the insignificant figure, with the boyish beardless face, by which it was assumed. Lord Castleton did not content himself with a mere bow at our introduction. Much to my wonder how he came by the information he displayed, he made me a little speech after the manner of Louis XIV. to a provincial noble—studiously modelled upon that royal maxim of urbane policy which instructs a king that he should know something of the birth, parentage, and family, of his meanest gentleman. It was a little speech, in which my father's learning, and my uncle's services, and the amiable qualities of your humble servant, were neatly interwoven—delivered in a falsetto tone, as if learned by heart, though it must have been necessarily improptu; and then, reseating himself, he made a gracious motion of the head and hand, as if to authorize me to do the same.

Conversation succeeded, by galvanic jerks and spasmodic starts—a conversation that Lord Castleton contrived to tug so completely out of poor Sir Sedley's ordinary course of small and polished small talk, that that charming personage, accustomed, as he well deserved, to be Coryphæus at his own table, was completely silenced. With his light reading, his

rich stores of anecdote, his good-humored knowledge of the drawing-room world, he had scarce a word that would fit into the great, rough, serious matters which Lord Castleton threw upon the table, as he nibbled his toast. Nothing but the most grave and practical subjects of human interest seemed to attract this future leader of mankind. The fact is that Lord Castleton had been taught everything that relates to *property*—(a knowledge which embraces a very wide circumference). It had been said to him, "You will be an immense proprietor—knowledge is essential to your self-preservation. You will be puzzled, bubbled, ridiculed, duped every day of your life, if you do not make yourself acquainted with all by which property is assailed or defended, impoverished or increased. You have a vast stake in the country—you must learn all the interests of Europe—nay, of the civilized world—for those interests react on the country, and the interests of the country are of the greatest possible consequence to the interests of the Marquis of Castleton." Thus the state of the Continent—the policy of Metternich—the condition of the Papacy—the growth of Dissent—the proper mode of dealing with the general spirit of Democracy, which was the epidemic of European monarchies—the relative proportions of the agricultural and manufacturing population—corn-laws, currency, and the laws that regulate wages—a criticism on the leading speakers of the House of Commons, with some discursive observations on the importance of fattening cattle—the introduction of flax into Ireland—emigration—the condition of the poor—the doctrines of Mr. Owen—the pathology of potatoes; the connection between potatoes, pauperism, and patriotism; these, and such-like stupendous subjects for reflection—all branching more or less intricately from the single idea of the Castleton property—the young lord discussed and disposed of in half-a-dozen prim, poised sentences—evincing, I must say in justice, no inconsiderable information, and a mighty solemn turn of mind. The oddity was, that the subjects so selected and treated should not come rather from some young barrister, or mature political economist, than from so gorgeous a lily of the field. Of a man less elevated in rank one would certainly have said—"Cleverish, but a prig;" but there really was something so respectable in a personage born to such fortunes, and having nothing to do but to bask in the sunshine, voluntarily taking such pains with himself, and condescending to identify his own interests—the interests of the Castleton property—with the concerns of his lesser fellow-mortals, that one felt the young marquis had in him the stuff to become a very considerable man.

Poor Sir Sedley, to whom all these matters were as unfamiliar as the theology of the Talmud, after some vain efforts to slide the conversation into easier grooves, fairly gave in, and, with a compassionate smile on his handsome countenance, took refuge in his easy-chair and the contemplation of his snuff-box.

At last, to our great relief, the servant announced Lord Castleton's carriage; and with another speech of overpowering affability to me, and a cold shake of the hand to Sir Sedley, Lord Castleton went his way.

The breakfast parlor looked on the street, and I turned mechanically to the window as Sir Sedley followed his guest out of the room. A travelling carriage with four post-horses, was at the door; and a servant, who looked like a foreigner, was in waiting with his master's cloak. As I saw Lord Castleton step into the street, and wrap himself in his costly mantle lined with sables, I observed, more than I had while he was in the room, the enervate slightness of his frail form, and the more than paleness of his thin joyless face; and then, instead of envy, I felt compassion for the owner of all this pomp and grandeur—felt that I would not have exchanged my hardy health, and easy humor, and vivid capacities of enjoyment in things the slightest and most within the reach of all men, for the wealth and greatness which that poor youth perhaps deserved the more for putting them so little to the service of pleasure.

"Well," said Sir Sedley, "and what do you think of him?"

"He is just the sort of man Trevanion would like," said I, evasively.

"That is true," answered Sir Sedley, in a serious tone of voice, and looking at me somewhat earnestly. "Have you heard?—but no, you cannot have heard yet."

"Heard what?"

"My dear young friend," said the kindest and most delicate of all fine gentlemen, sauntering away that he might not observe the emotion he caused, "Lord Castleton is going to

Paris to join the Trevanions. The object Lady Ellinor has had at heart for many a long year is won, and our pretty Fanny will be Marchioness of Castleton when her betrothed is of age—that is, in six months. The two mothers have settled it all between them!"

I made no answer, but continued to look out of the window.

"This alliance," resumed Sir Sedley, "was all that was wanting to assure Trevanion's position. When parliament meets, he will have some great office. Poor man! how I shall pity him! It is extraordinary to me," continued Sir Sedley, benevolently going on, that I might have full time to recover myself, "how contagious that disease called 'business' is in our foggy England! Not only Trevanion, you see, has the complaint in its very worst and most complicated form, but that poor dear cousin of mine, who is so young (here Sir Sedley sighed), and might enjoy himself so much, is worse than you were when Trevanion was fagging you to death. But, to be sure, a great name and position, like Castleton's, must be a very heavy affliction to a conscientious mind. You see how the sense of its responsibilities has *aged* him already—positively, two great wrinkles under his eyes. Well, after all, I admire him, and respect his tutor: a soil naturally very thin, I suspect, has been most carefully cultivated; and Castleton, with Trevanion's help, will be the first man in the peerage—prime minister some day, I dare say. And when I think of it, how grateful I ought to fell to his father and mother, who produced him quite in their old age; for, if he had not been born, I should have been the most miserable of men—yes, positively, that horrible marquisate would have come to me! I never think over Horace Walpole's regrets, when he got the earldom of Orford, without the deepest sympathy, and without a shudder at the thought of what my dear Lady Castleton was kind enough to save me from—all owing to the Ems waters, after twenty years' marriage! Well, my young friend, and how are all at home?"

As when, some notable performer not having yet arrived behind the scenes, or having to change his dress, or not having yet quite recovered an unlucky extra tumbler of exciting fluids—and the green curtain has therefore unduly delayed its ascent—you perceive that the thorough-bass in the orchestra charitably devotes himself to a prelude of astonishing prolixity, calling in *Lodoiska* or *Der Freischutz* to beguile the time, and allow the procrastinating histrio leisure sufficient to draw on his flesh-colored pantaloons, and give himself the proper complexion for a Coriolanus or Macbeth—even so had Sir Sedley made that long speech, requiring no rejoinder, till he saw the time had arrived when he could artfully close with the flourish of a final interrogative, in order to give poor Pisistratus Caxton all preparation to compose himself and step forward. There is certainly something of exquisite kindness, and thoughtful benevolence, in that rarest of gifts, *—fine breeding;* and when now, re-manned and resolute, I turned round and saw Sir Sedley's soft blue eye shyly, but benignantly turned to me—while, with a grace no other snuff-taker ever had, since the days of Pope, he gently proceeded to refresh himself by a pinch of the celebrated Beaudesert mixture—I felt my heart as gratefully moved towards him as if he had conferred on me some colossal obligation. And this crowning question—"And how are all at home?" restored me entirely to my self-possession, and for the moment distracted the bitter current of my thoughts.

I replied by a brief statement of my father's involvement, disguising our apprehensions as to its extent, speaking of it rather as an annoyance than a possible cause of ruin, and ended by asking Sir Sedley to give me the address of Trevanion's lawyer.

The good baronet listened with great attention; and that quick penetration which belongs to a man of the world enabled him to detect, that I had smoothed over matters more than became a faithful narrator.

He shook his head, and, seating himself on the sofa, motioned me to come to his side; then, leaning his arm over my shoulder, he said in his seductive, winning way—

"We two young fellows should understand each other when we talk of money matters. I can say to you what I could not say to my respectable senior—by three years; your excellent father. Frankly, then, I suspect this is a bad business. I know little about newspapers, except that I have to subscribe to one in my county, which costs me a small income; but I know that a London daily paper might ruin a man in a few weeks. And as for share-

holders, my dear Caxton, I was once teased into being a shareholder in a canal that ran through my property, and ultimately ran off with £30,000 of it! The other shareholders were all drowned in the canal, like Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. But your father is a great scholar, and must not be plagued with such matters. I owe him a great deal. He was very kind to me at Cambridge, and gave me the taste for reading, to which I owe the pleasantest hours of my life. So, when you and the lawyers have found out what the extent of the mischief is, you and I must see how we can best settle it. What the deuce! my young friend—I have no 'encumbrances,' as the servants, with great want of politeness, call wives and children. And I am not a miserable great landed millionaire, like that poor dear Castleton, who owes so many duties to society that he can't spend a shilling, except in a grand way, and purely to benefit the public. So go, my boy, to Trevanion's lawyer: he is mine too. Clever fellow—sharp as a needle, Mr. Pike, in Great Ormond Street—name on a brass plate; and when he has settled the amount, we young scapegraces will help each other, without a word to the old folks."

What good it does to a man, throughout life, to meet kindness and generosity like this in his youth!

I need not say that I was too faithful a representative of my father's scholarly pride, and susceptible independence of spirit, to accept this proposal; and probably Sir Sedley, rich and liberal as he was, did not dream of the extent to which his proposal might involve him. But I expressed my gratitude, so as to please and move this last relic of the De Coverleys, and went from his house straight to Mr. Pike's office, with a little note of introduction from Sir Sedley. I found Mr. Pike exactly the man I had anticipated from Trevanion's character—short, quick, intelligent, in question and answer; imposing, and somewhat domineering, in manner—not overcrowded with business, but with enough for experience and respectability; neither young nor old; neither a pedantic machine of parchment, nor a jaunty off-hand coxcomb of West End manners.

"It is an ugly affair," said he, "but one that requires management. Leave it all in my hands for three days. Don't go near Mr. Tibbets, nor Mr. Peck: and on Saturday next, at two o'clock, if you will call here you shall know my opinion of the whole matter." With that, Mr. Pike glanced at the clock, and I took up my hat and went.

There is no place more delightful than a great capital, if you are comfortably settled in it—have arranged the methodical disposal of your time, and know how to take business and pleasure in due proportions. But a flying visit to a great capital, in an unsettled, unsatisfactory way—at an inn—an inn in the City, too—with a great worrying load of business on your mind, of which you are to hear no more for three days; and an aching, jealous, miserable sorrow at the heart, such as I had—leaving you no labor to pursue, and no pleasure that you have the heart to share in—oh, a great capital then is indeed forlorn, wearisome, and oppressive! It is the Castle of Indolence, not as Thomson built it, but as Beckford drew in his Hall of Eblis—a wandering up and down, to and fro—a great awful space, with your hand pressed to your heart; and—oh for a rush on some half-tamed horse, through the measureless green wastes of Australia! That is the place for a man who has no home in the Babel, and whose hand is ever pressing to his heart, with its dull, burning pain.

Mr. Squills decoyed me the second evening into one of the small theatres; and very heartily did Mr. Squills enjoy all he saw, and all he heard. And while, with a convulsive effort of the jaws, I was trying to laugh too, suddenly in one of the actors, who was performing the worshipful part of a parish beadle, I recognized a face that I had seen before. Five minutes afterwards I had disappeared from the side of Squills, and was amidst that strange world—BEHIND THE SCENES.

My beadle was much too busy and important to allow me a good opportunity to accost him, till the piece was over. I then seized hold of him, as he was amicably sharing a pot of porter with a gentleman in black shorts and a laced waistcoat, who was to play the part of a broken-hearted father in the Domestic Drama in Three Acts, that would conclude the amusements of the evening.

"Excuse me," said I, apologetically; "but as the Swan pertinently observes,—'Should auld acquaintance be forgot?'"

"The Swan, sir!" cried the beadle, aghast

—"the Swan never demeaned himself by such d—d broad Scotch as that!"

"The Tweed has its swans as well as the Avon, Mr. Peacock."

"St—st—hush—hush—h—u—sh!" whispered the beadle in great alarm, and eyeing me, with savage observation, under his corked eyebrows. Then, taking me by the arm, he jerked me away. When he had got as far as the narrow limits of that little stage would allow, Mr. Peacock said—

"Sir, you have the advantage of me; I don't remember you. Ah! you need not look!—by gad, sir, I am not to be bullied,—it was all fair play. If you will play with gentlemen, sir, you must run the consequences."

I hastened to appease the worthy man.

"Indeed, Mr. Peacock, if you remember, I refused to play with you; and, so far from wishing to offend you, I now come on purpose to compliment you on your excellent acting, and to inquire if you have heard anything lately of your young friend Mr. Vivian."

"Vivian?—never heard the name, sir. Vivian! Pooh, you are trying to hoax me; very good!"

"I assure you, Mr. Peac"—

"St—st—How the deuce did you know that I was once called Peac—that is, people called me Peac—A friendly nickname, no more—drop it, sir, or you 'touch me with noble anger!'"

"Well, well; 'the rose by any name will smell as sweet,' as the Swan, this time at least judiciously, observes. But, Mr. Vivian, too, seems to have other names at his disposal. I mean a young, dark, handsome man—or rather boy—with whom I met you in company by the roadside, one morning."

"O—h," said Mr. Peacock, looking much relieved, "I know whom you mean, though I don't remember to have had the pleasure of seeing you before. No; I have not heard anything of the young man lately. I wish I did know something of him. He was a 'gentleman in my own way.' Sweet Will has hit him off to a hair!—

'The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword.'

Such a hand with a cue!—you should have seen him seek the 'bubble reputation at the *cannon's* mouth.' I may say," continued Mr. Peacock, emphatically, "that he was a regular trump—trump!" he reiterated with a start, as if the word had stung him—"trump! he was a BRICK!"

Then fixing his eyes on me, dropping his arms, interlacing his fingers, in the manner recorded of Talma in the celebrated "Qu'en dis-tu?" he resumed in a hollow voice, slow and distinct—

"When—saw—you—him,—young m—m—a—n—nnn?"

Finding the tables thus turned on myself, and not willing to give Mr. Peac— any clue to poor Vivian (who thus appeared, to my great satisfaction, to have finally dropped an acquaintance more versatile than reputable), I contrived, by a few evasive sentences, to keep Mr. Peac—'s curiosity at a distance, till he was summoned in haste to change his attire for the domestic drama. And so we parted.

CHAPTER VI.

I HATE law details as cordially as my readers can, and therefore I shall content myself with stating that Mr. Pike's management, at the end, not of three days, but of two weeks, was so admirable, that Uncle Jack was drawn out of prison, and my father extracted from all his liabilities, by a sum two-thirds less than was first startlingly submitted to our indignant horror—and that, too, in a manner that would have satisfied the conscience of the most punctilious formalist, whose contribution to the national fund, for an omitted payment to the Income Tax, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ever had the honor to acknowledge. Still the sum was very large in proportion to my poor father's income; and what with Jack's debts, the claims of the Anti-Publisher Society's printer—including the very expensive plates that had been so lavishly bespoken, and in great part completed, for the *History of Human Error*—and, above all, the liabilities incurred on *The Capitalist;* what with the *plant*, as Mr. Peck technically phrased a great upas-tree of a total, branching out into types, cases, printing-presses, engines, etc., all now to be resold at a third of their value; what with advertisements and bills, that had covered all the dead walls by which rubbish might be shot, throughout the three

kingdoms; what with the dues of reporters, and salaries of writers, who had been engaged for a year at least to *The Capitalist*, and whose claims survived the wretch they had killed and buried; what, in short, with all that the combined ingenuity of Uncle Jack and Printer Peck could supply for the utter ruin of the Caxton family—even after all deductions, curtailments, and after all that one could extract in the way of just contribution from the least unsubstantial of those shadows called the shareholders—my father's fortune was reduced to a sum of between seven and eight thousand pounds, which being placed at mortgage at 4 per cent., yielded just £372 10s. a year—enough for my father to live upon, but not enough to afford also his son Pisistratus the advantages of education at Trinity College, Cambridge. The blow fell rather upon me than my father, and my young shoulders bore it without much wincing.

This settled, to our universal satisfaction, I went to pay my farewell visit to Sir Sedley Beaudesert. He had made much of me, during my stay in London. I had breakfasted and dined with him pretty often; I had presented Squills to him, who no sooner set eyes upon that splendid conformation, than he described his character with the nicest accuracy, as the necessary consequence of such a development for the rosy pleasures of life. We had never once retouched on the subject of Fanny's marriage, and both of us tacitly avoided even mentioning the Trevanions. But in this last visit, though he maintained the same reserve as to Fanny, he referred without scruple to her father.

"Well, my young Athenian," said he, after congratulating me on the result of the negotiations, and endeavoring again in vain to bear at least some share in my father's losses—"well, I see I cannot press this farther; but at least I *can* press on you any little interest I may have, in obtaining some appointment for yourself in one of the public offices. Trevanion could of course be more useful, but I can understand that he is not the kind of man you would like to apply to."

"Shall I own to you, my dear Sir Sedley, that I have no taste for official employment? I am too fond of my liberty. Since I have been at my uncle's old Tower, I account for half my character by the Borderer's blood that is in me. I doubt if I am meant for the life of cities; and I have odd floating notions in my head, that will serve to amuse me when I get home, and may settle into schemes. And now to change the subject, may I ask what kind of person has succeeded me as Mr. Trevanion's secretary?"

"Why, he has got a broad-shouldered, stooping fellow, in spectacles and cotton stockings, who has written upon 'Rent,' I believe—an imaginative treatise in his case, I fear, for rent is a thing he could never have received, and not often been trusted to pay. However, he is one of your political economists, and wants Trevanion to sell his pictures, as 'unproductive capital.' Less mild than Pope's Narcissa, 'to make a wash,' he would certainly 'stew a child.' Besides this official secretary, Trevanion trusts, however, a good deal to a clever, good-looking young gentleman, who is a great favorite with him."

"What is his name?"

"His name?—oh, Gower; a natural son, I believe, of one of the Gower family."

Here two of Sir Sedley's fellow fine gentlemen lounged in, and my visit ended.

CHAPTER VII.

"I SWEAR," cried my uncle, "that it *shall* be so." And with a big frown, and a truculent air, he seized the fatal instrument.

"Indeed, brother, it must not," said my father, laying one pale, scholar-like hand mildly on Captain Roland's brown, bellicose, and bony fist; and with the other, outstretched, protecting the menaced, palpitating victim.

Not a word had my uncle heard of our losses, until they had been adjusted, and the sum paid; for we all knew that the old Tower would have been gone—sold to some neighboring squire or jobbing attorney—at the first impetuous impulse of Uncle Roland's affectionate generosity. Austin endangered! Austin ruined!—he would never have rested till he came, cash in hand, to his deliverance. Therefore, I say, not till all was settled did I write to the Captain, and tell him gaily what had chanced. And, however light I made of our misfortunes, the letter brought the Captain to the red brick house the same evening on which

I myself reached it, and about an hour later. My uncle had not sold the Tower, but he came prepared to carry us off to it *vi et armis*. We must live with him, and on him—let or sell the brick house, and put out the remnant of my father's income to nurse and accumulate. And it was on finding my father's resistance stubborn, and that hitherto he had made no way, that my uncle, stepping back into the hall, in which he had left his carpet back, etc., returned with an old oak case, and touching a spring roller, out flew the Caxton pedigree.

Out it flew—covering all the table, and undulating, Nile-like, till it had spread over books, papers, my mother's work-box, and the tea-service (for the table was large and compendious, emblematic of its owner's mind)—and then, flowing on the carpet, dragged its slow length along, till it was stopped by the fender.

"Now," said my uncle, solemnly, "there never have been but two causes of difference between you and me, Austin. One is over; why should the other last? Aha! I know why you hang back; you think that we may quarrel about it!"

"About what, Roland?"

"About it, I say—and I'll be d—d if we do!" cried my uncle, reddening. "And I have been thinking a great deal upon the matter, and I have no doubt you are right. So I brought the old parchment with me, and you shall see me fill up the blank, just as you would have it. Now, then, you will come and live with me, and we can never quarrel any more."

Thus saying, Uncle Roland looked round for pen and ink; and, having found them—not without difficulty, for they had been submerged under the overflow of the pedigree—he was about to fill up the *lacuna*, or *hiatus*, which had given rise to such memorable controversy, with the name of "William Caxton, printer in the Sanctuary," when my father, slowly recovering his breath, and aware of his brother's purpose, intervened. It would have done your heart good to hear them—so completely, in the inconsistency of human nature, had they changed sides upon the question—my father now all for Sir William de Caxton, the hero of Bosworth; my uncle all for the immortal printer. And in this discussion they grew animated: their eyes sparkled, their voices rose—Roland's voice deep and thunderous, Austin's sharp and piercing. Mr. Squills stopped his ears. Thus it arrived at that point, when my uncle doggedly came to the end of all argumentation—"I swear that it shall be so;" and my father, trying the last resource of pathos, looked pleadingly into Roland's eyes, and said, with a tone soft as mercy, "Indeed, brother, it must not." Meanwhile the dry parchment crisped, creaked, and trembled in every pore of its yellow skin.

"But," said I, coming in, opportunely, like the Horatian deity, "I don't see that either of you gentlemen has a right so to dispose of my ancestry. It is quite clear that a man has no possession in posterity. Posterity may possess him; but deuce a bit will he ever be the better for his great great-grandchildren!"

SQUILLS.—Hear, hear!

PISISTRATUS (warming).—But a man's ancestry is a positive property to him. How much, not only of acres, but of his constitution, his temper, his conduct, character, and nature, he may inherit from some progenitor ten times removed! Nay, without that progenitor would he ever have been born—would a Squills ever have introduced him into the world, or a nurse ever have carried him *upo kolpo?*

SQUILLS.—Hear, hear!

PISISTRATUS (with dignified emotion).—No man, therefore, has a right to rob another of a forefather, with a stroke of his pen, from any motives, howsoever amiable. In the present instance, you will say, perhaps, that the ancestor in question is apocryphal—it may be the printer, it may be the knight. Granted; but here, where history is in fault, shall a mere sentiment decide? While both are doubtful, my imagination appropriates both. At one time I can reverence industry and learning in the printer; at another, valor and devotion in the knight. This kindly doubt gives me two great forefathers; and, through them, two trains of idea that influence my conduct under different circumstances. I will not permit you, Captain Roland, to rob me of either forefather—either train of idea. Leave, then, this sacred void unfilled, unprofaned; and accept this compromise of chivalrous courtesy—while my father lives with the Captain, we will believe in the printer; when away from the Captain, we will stand firm to the knight.

"Good!" cried Uncle Roland, as I paused, a little out of breath.

"And," said my mother, softly, "I do think,

Austin, there is a way of settling the matter which will please all parties. It is quite sad to think that poor Roland, and dear little Blanche, should be all alone in the Tower; and I am sure that we should be much happier altogether."

"There!" cried Roland, triumphantly. "If you are not the most obstinate, hard hearted, unfeeling brute in the world—which I don't take you to be—brother Austin, after that really beautiful speech of your wife's, there is not a word to be said further."

"But we have not yet heard Kitty to the end, Roland."

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, ma'am—sister," said the Captain, bowing.

"Well, I was going to add," said my mother, "that we will go and live with you, Roland, and club our little fortunes together. Blanche and I will take care of the house, and we shall be just twice as rich together as we are separately."

"Pretty sort of hospitality that!" grunted the Captain. "I did not expect you to throw me over in that way. No, no; you must lay by for the boy there—what's to become of him?"

"But we shall *all* lay by for him," said my mother, simply; "you as well as Austin. We shall have more to save, if we have more to spend."

"Ah, save!—that is easily said: there would be a pleasure in saving, then," said the Captain, mournfully.

"And what's to become of me?" cried Squills, very petulantly. "Am I to be left here in my old age—not a rational soul to speak to, and no other place in the village where there's a drop of decent punch to be had! 'A plague on both your houses!' as the chap said at the theatre the other night."

"There's room for a doctor in our neighborhood, Mr. Squills," said the Captain. "The gentleman in your profession who *does for us*, wants, I know, to sell the business."

"Humph," said Squills—"a horribly healthy neighborhood, I suspect!"

"Why, it has that misfortune, Mr. Squills; but with your help," said my uncle, slyly, "a great alteration for the better may be effected in that respect."

Mr. Squills was about to reply, when ring—a-ting—ring—ting! there came such a brisk, impatient, make-one's-self-at-home kind of tintinnabular alarum at the great gate, that we all started up and looked at each other in surprise. Who could it possibly be? We were not kept long in suspense; for in another moment, Uncle Jack's voice, which was always very clear and distinct, pealed through the hall; and we were still staring at each other when Mr. Tibbets, with a bran-new muffler round his neck, and a peculiarly comfortable greatcoat—best double Saxony, equally new—dashed into the room, bringing with him a very considerable quantity of cold air, which he hastened to thaw, first in my father's arms, next in my mother's. He then made a rush at the Captain, who ensconced himself behind the dumb waiter with a "Hem! Mr.—sir—Jack—sir—hem, hem!" Failing there, Mr. Tibbets rubbed off the remaining frost upon his double Saxony against your humble servant; patted Squills affectionately on the back, and then proceeded to occupy his favorite position before the fire.

"Took you by surprise, eh?" said Uncle Jack, unpeeling himself by the hearth-rug. "But no—not by surprise; you must have known Jack's heart: you at least, Austin Caxton, who know everything—you must have seen that it overflowed with the tenderest and most brotherly emotions; that once delivered from that cursed Fleet (you have no idea what a place it is, sir), I could not rest, night or day, till I had flown here—here, to the dear family nest—poor wounded dove that I am!" added Uncle Jack, pathetically, and taking out his pocket-handkerchief from the double Saxony, which he had now flung over my father's arm-chair.

Not a word replied to this eloquent address, with its touching peroration. My mother hung down her pretty head, and looked ashamed. My uncle retreated quite into the corner, and drew the dumb waiter after him, so as to establish a complete fortification. Mr. Squills seized the pen that Roland had thrown down, and began mending it furiously—that is, cutting it into slivers—thereby denoting, symbolically, how he would like to do with Uncle Jack, could he once get him safe and snug under his manipular operations. I bent over the pedigree, and my father rubbed his spectacles.

The silence would have been appalling to another man: nothing appalled Uncle Jack.

Uncle Jack turned to the fire, and warmed first one foot, then the other. This comfortable ceremony performed, he again faced the company—and resumed, musingly, and as if answering some imaginary observations—

"Yes, yes—you are right there—and a deuced unlucky speculation it proved too. But I was overruled by that fellow Peck. Says I to him—says I—'*Capitalist!* pshaw—no popular interest there—it don't address the great public! Very confined class the capitalists; better throw ourselves boldly on the people. Yes,' said I, 'call it the *anti*-Capitalist.' By Jove! sir, we should have carried all before us! but I was overruled. The *Anti-Capitalist!*—what an idea! Address the whole reading world there, sir: everybody hates the capitalist—everybody would have his neighbor's money. The *Anti-Capitalist!*—sir: we should have gone off, in the manufacturing towns, like wildfire. But what could I do?——"

"John Tibbets," said my father, solemnly, "Capitalist or Anti-Capitalist, thou hadst a right to follow thine own bent in either—but always provided it had been with thine own money. Thou seest not the thing, John Tibbets, in the right point of view; and a little repentance in the face of those thou hast wronged, would not have misbecome thy father's son, and thy sister's brother!"—

Never had so severe a rebuke issued from the mild lips of Austin Caxton; and I raised my eyes with a compassionate thrill, expecting to see John Tibbets gradually sink and disappear through the carpet.

"Repentance!" cried Uncle Jack, bounding up, as if he had been shot. "And do you think I have a heart of stone, of pummystone!—do you think I don't repent? I have done nothing but repent—I shall repent to my dying day."

"Then there is no more to be said, Jack," cried my father, softening, and holding out his hand.

"Yes!" cried Mr. Tibbets, seizing the hand, and pressing it to the heart he had thus defended from the suspicion of being pummy—"yes,—that I should have trusted that dunderheaded, rascally, curmudgeon Peck: that I should have let him call it *The Capitalist*, despite all my convictions, when the *Anti*——"

"Pshaw!" interrupted my father, drawing away his hand.

"John," said my mother, gravely, and with tears in her voice, "you forget who delivered you from prison,—you forget whom you have nearly consigned to prison yourself—you forg——"

"Hush, hush!" said my father, "this will never do; and it is you who forget, my dear, the obligations I owe to Jack. He has reduced my fortune one-half, it is true; but I verily think he has made the three hearts, in which lie my real treasures, twice as large as they were before. Pisistratus, my boy, ring the bell."

"My dear Kitty," cried Jack, whimperingly, and stealing up to my mother, "don't be so hard on me; I thought to make all your fortunes—I did, indeed."

Here the servant entered.

"See that Mr. Tibbets' things are taken up to his room, and that there is a good fire," said my father.

"And," continued Jack, loftily, "I *will* make all your fortunes yet. I have it *here!*" and he struck his head.

"Stay a moment!" said my father to the servant, who had got back to the door. "Stay a moment," said my father, looking extremely frightened; "perhaps Mr. Tibbets may prefer the inn!"

"Austin," said Uncle Jack, with emotion, "if I were a dog, with no home but a dog-kennel, and you came to me for shelter, I would turn out—to give you the best of the straw!"

My father was thoroughly melted this time.

"Primmins will be sure to see everything is made comfortable for Mr. Tibbets," said he, waving his hand to the servant. "Something nice for supper, Kitty, my dear—and the largest punch-bowl. You like punch, Jack?"

"Punch, Austin!" said Uncle Jack, putting his handkerchief to his eyes.

The Captain pushed aside the dumb waiter, strode across the room, and shook hands with Uncle Jack; my mother buried her face in her apron, and fairly ran off; and Squills said in my ear, "It all comes of the biliary secretions. Nobody could account for this, who did not know the peculiarly fine organization of your father's—liver!"

PART TWELFTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE Hegira is completed—we have all taken roost in the old tower. My father's books have arrived by the wagon, and have settled themselves quietly in their new abode—filling up the apartment dedicated to their owner, including the bed-chamber and two lobbies. The duck also has arrived, under wing of Mrs. Primmins, and has reconciled herself to the old stewpond; by the side of which my father has found a walk that compensates for the peach wall—especially as he has made acquaintance with sundry respectable carps, who permit him to feed them after he has fed the duck—a privilege of which (since, if any one else approaches, the carps are off in an instant) my father is naturally vain. All privileges are valuable in proportion to the exclusiveness of their enjoyment.

Now, from the moment the first carp had eaten the bread my father threw to it, Mr. Caxton had mentally resolved, that a race so confiding should never be sacrificed to Ceres and Primmins. But all the fishes on my uncle's property were under the special care of that Proteus, Bolt—and Bolt was not a man likely to suffer the carps to earn their bread without contributing their full share to the wants of the community. But, like master, like man! Bolt was an aristocrat fit to be hung *à la lanterne*. He out-Rolanded Roland in the respect he entertained for sounding names and old families; and by that bait my father caught him with such skill, that you might see that, if Austin Caxton had been an angler of fishes, he could have filled his basket full any day, shine or rain.

"You observe, Bolt," said my father, beginning artfully, "that those fishes, dull as you may think them, are creatures capable of a syllogism; and if they saw that, in proportion to their civilty to me, they were depopulated by you, they would put two and two together, and renounce my acquaintance."

"Is that what you call being silly Jems, sir?" said Bolt: "faith, there is many a good Christian not half so wise!"

"Man," answered my father, thoughtfully, "is an animal less syllogistical, or more silly-Jemical, than many creatures popularly esteemed his inferiors. Yes, let but one of those Cyprinidæ, with his fine sense of logic, see that, if his fellow-fishes eat bread, they are suddenly jerked out of their element, and vanish for ever; and though you broke a quartern loaf into crumbs, he would snap his tail at you with enlightened contempt. If," said my father, soliloquizing, "I had been as syllogistic as those scaly logicians, I should never have swallowed that hook, which—hum! there—least said soonest mended. But, Mr. Bolt, to return to the Cyprinidæ."

"What's the hard name you call them 'ere carp, your honor?" asked Bolt.

"Cyprinidæ, a family of the section Malacoptergii Abdominales," replied Mr. Caxton; "their teeth are generally confined to the Pharyngeans, and their branchiostegous rays are but few—marks of distinction from fishes vulgar and voracious."

"Sir," said Bolt, glancing to the stewpond, "if I had known they had been a family of such importance, I am sure I should have treated them with more respect."

"They are a very old family, Bolt, and have been settled in England since the fourteenth century. A younger branch of the family has established itself in a pond in the gardens of Peterhoff (the celebrated palace of Peter the

Great, Bolt—an emperor highly respected by my brother, for he killed a great many people very gloriously in battle, beside those whom he sabred for his own private amusement). And there is an officer or servant of the Imperial Household, whose task it is to summon those Russian Cyprinidæ to dinner, by ringing a bell, shortly after which, you may see the emperor and empress, with all their waiting ladies and gentlemen, coming down in their carriages to see the Cyprinidæ eat in state. So you perceive, Bolt, that it would be a republican, Jacobinical proceeding to stew members of a family so intimately associated with royalty."

"Dear me, sir!" said Bolt, "I am very glad you told me. I ought to have known they were genteel fish, they are so mighty shy—as all your real quality are."

My father smiled, and rubbed his hands gently; he had carried his point, and henceforth the Cyprinidæ of the section Malacoptergii Abdominales were as sacred in Bolt's eyes as cats and ichneumons were in those of a priest in Thebes.

My poor father! with what true and unostentatious philosophy thou didst accommodate thyself to the greatest change thy quiet, harmless life had known, since it had passed out of the brief burning cycle of the passions. Lost was the home, endeared to thee by so many noiseless victories of the mind—so many mute histories of the heart—for only the scholar knoweth how deep a charm lies in monotony, in the old associations, the old ways, and habitual clockwork of peaceful time. Yet, the home may be replaced—thy heart built its home round itself everywhere—and the old Tower might supply the loss of the brick house, and the walk by the stewpond become as dear as the haunts by the sunny peach wall. But what shall replace to thee the bright dream of thine innocent ambition,—that angel-wing which had glittered across thy manhood, in the hour between its noon and its setting? What replace to thee the Magnum Opus—the Great Book!—fair and broadspreading tree—lone amidst the sameness of the landscape—now plucked up by the roots! The oxygen was subtracted from the air of thy life. For be it known to you, O my compassionate readers, that with the death of the Anti-Publisher Society the blood-streams of the Great Book stood still—its pulse was arrested—its full heart beat no more. Three thousand copies of the first seven sheets in the quarto, with sundry unfinished plates, anatomical, architectural, and graphic, depicting various developments of the human skull (that temple of Human Error), from the Hottentot to the Greek; sketches of ancient buildings, Cyclopean and Pelasgic; Pyramids, and Pur-tors, all signs of races whose handwriting was on their walls; landscapes to display the influence of Nature upon the customs, creeds, and philosophy of men—here showing how the broad Chaldean wastes led to the contemplation of the stars; and illustrations of the Zodiac, in elucidation of the mysteries of symbol worship; fantastic vagaries of earth fresh from the Deluge, tending to impress on early superstition the awful sense of the rude powers of Nature; views of the rocky defiles of Laconia; Sparta, neighbored by the "silent Amyclæ," explaining, as it were, geographically, the iron customs of the warrior colony (arch Tories, amidst the shift and roar of Hellenic democracies), contrasted by the seas, and coasts, and creeks of Athens and Ionia, tempting to adventure, commerce, and change. Yea, my father, in his suggestions to the artist of those few imperfect plates, had thrown as much light on the infancy of earth and its tribes as by the "shining words" that flowed from his calm, starry knowledge! Plates and copies, all rested now in peace and dust—"housed with darkness and with death," on the sepulchral shelves of the lobby to which they were consigned—rays intercepted—worlds incompleted. The Prometheus was bound, and the fire he had stolen from heaven lay imbedded in the flints of his rock. For so costly was the mould in which Uncle Jack and the Anti-Publisher Society had contrived to cast this Exposition of Human Error, that every bookseller shyed at its very sight, as an owl blinks at daylight, or human error at truth. In vain Squills and I, before we left London, had carried a gigantic specimen of the Magnum Opus into the back-parlors of firms the most opulent and adventurous. Publisher after publisher started, as if we had held a blunderbuss to his ear. All Paternoster Row uttered a "Lord deliver us!" Human Error found no man so egregiously its victim as to complete those two quartos, with the prospect of two others, at his own expense. Now, I had earnestly hoped

that my father, for the sake of mankind, would be persuaded to risk some portion,—and that, I own, not a small one—of his remaining capital on the conclusion of an undertaking so elaborately begun. But there my father was obdurate. No big words about mankind, and the advantage to unborn generations, could stir him an inch. "Stuff!" said Mr. Caxton, peevishly. "A man's duties to mankind and posterity begin with his own son; and having wasted half your patrimony, I will not take another huge slice out of the poor remainder to gratify my vanity, for that is the plain truth of it. Man must atone for sin by expiation. By the book I have sinned, and the book must expiate it. Pile the sheets up in the lobby, so that at least one man may be wiser and humbler by the sight of Human Error, every time he walks by so stupendous a monument of it."

Verily, I know not how my father could bear to look at those dumb fragments of himself—strata of the Caxtonian conformation lying layer upon layer, as if packed up and disposed for the inquisitive genius of some moral Murchison or Mantell. But for my part, I never glanced at their repose in the dark lobby, without thinking, "Courage, Pisistratus! courage! there's something worth living for; work hard, grow rich, and the Great Book shall come out at last."

Meanwhile, I wandered over the country, and made acquaintance with the farmers, and with Trevanion's steward—an able man, and a great agriculturist—and I learned from them a better notion of the nature of my uncle's domains. Those domains covered an immense acreage, which, save a small farm, was of no value at present. But land of the same sort had been lately redeemed by a simple kind of draining, now well known in Cumberland; and, with capital, Roland's barren moors might become a noble property. But capital, where was that to come from? Nature gives us all except the means to turn her into marketable account. As old Plautus saith so wittily, "Day, night, water, sun, and moon, are to be had gratis; for everything else—down with your dust!"

CHAPTER II.

Nothing has been heard of Uncle Jack. Before we left the brick house, the captain gave him an invitation to the Tower—more, I suspect, out of compliment to my mother than from the unbidden impulse of his own inclinations. But Mr. Tibbets politely declined it. During his stay at the brick house, he had received and written a vast number of letters—some of those he received, indeed, were left at the village post-office, under the alphebetical addresses of A B or X Y. For no misfortune ever paralyzed the energies of Uncle Jack. In the winter of adversity he vanished, it is true, but even in vanishing he vegetated still. He resembled those *algæ*, termed the *Prolococcus nivales*, which give a rose color to the Polar snows that conceal them, and flourish unsuspected amidst the general dissolution of Nature. Uncle Jack, then, was as lively and sanguine as ever—though he began to let fall vague hints of intentions to abandon the general cause of his fellow-creatures, and to set up business henceforth purely on his own account; wherewith my father—to the great shock of my belief in his philanthropy—expressed himself much pleased. And I strongly suspect that, when Uncle Jack wrapped himself up in his new double Saxony, and went off at last, he carried with him something more than my father's good wishes in aid of his conversion to egotistical philosophy.

"That man will do yet," said my father, as the last glimpse was caught of Uncle Jack standing up on the stage-coach box, beside the driver—partly to wave his hand to us as we stood at the gate, and partly to array himself more commodiously in a box-coat, with six capes, which the coachman had lent him.

"Do you think so, sir?" said I, doubtfully. "May I ask why?"

Mr. Caxton.—On the cat principle—that he tumbles so lightly. You may throw him down from St. Paul's, and the next time you see him he will be scrambling a-top of the Monument.

Pisistratus.—But a cat the most viparious is limited to nine lives; and Uncle Jack must be now far gone in his eighth.

Mr. Caxton (not heeding that answer, for he has got his hand in his waistcoat).—The earth, according to Apuleius, in his *Treatise on*

the Philosophy of Plato, was produced from right-angled triangles; but fire and air from the scalene triangle—the angles of which, I need not say, are very different from those of a right-angled triangle. Now I think there are people in the world of whom one can only judge rightly according to those mathematical principles applied to their original construction: for, if air or fire predominates in our natures, we are scalene triangles;—if earth, right-angled. Now, as air is so notably manifested in Jack's conformation, he is, *nolens volens*, produced in conformity with his preponderating element. He is a scalene triangle, and must be judged, accordingly, upon irregular, lop-sided principles; whereas you and I, common-place mortals, are produced, like the earth, which is our preponderating element, with our triangles all right-angled, comfortable and complete—for which blessing let us thank Providence, and be charitable to those who are necessarily windy and gaseous, from that unlucky scalene triangle upon which they have had the misfortune to be constructed, and which, you perceive, is quite at variance with the mathematical constitution of the earth!

PISISTRATUS.—Sir, I am very happy to hear so simple, easy, and intelligible an explanation of Uncle Jack's peculiarities; and I only hope that, for the future, the sides of his scalene triangle may never be produced to our rectangular conformations.

MR. CAXTON (descending from his stilts, with an air as mildly reproachful as if I had been cavilling at the virtues of Socrates).—You don't do your uncle justice, Pisistratus; he is a very clever man; and I am sure that, in spite of his scalene misfortune, he would be an honest one—that is (added Mr. Caxton, correcting himself), not romantically or heroically honest—but honest as men go—if he could but keep his head long enough above water; but, you see, when the best man in the world is engaged in the process of sinking, he catches hold of whatever comes in his way, and drowns the very friend who is swimming to save him.

PISISTRATUS.—Perfectly true, sir; but Uncle Jack makes it his business to be *always* sinking!

MR. CAXTON (with *naïveté*).—And how could it be otherwise, when he has been carrying all his fellow-creatures in his breeches' pockets! Now he has got rid of that dead weight, I should not be surprised if he swam like a cork.

PISISTRATUS (who, since the *Capitalist*, has become a strong Anti-Jackian).—But if, sir, you really think Uncle Jack's love for his fellow creatures is genuine, that is surely not the worst part of him.

MR. CAXTON.—O literal ratiocinator, and dull to the true logic of Attic irony! can't you comprehend that an affection may be genuine as felt by the man, yet its nature be spurious in relation to others? A man may genuinely believe he loves his fellow creatures, when he roasts them like Torquemada, or guillotines them like St. Just! Happily Jack's scalene triangle, being more produced from air than from fire, does not give to his philanthropy the inflammatory character which distinguishes the benevolence of inquisitors and revolutionists. The philanthropy, therefore, takes a more flatulent and innocent form, and expends its strength in mounting paper balloons, out of which Jack pitches himself, with all the fellow creatures he can coax into sailing with him. No doubt Uncle Jack's philanthropy is sincere, when he cuts the string and soars up out of sight; but the sincerity will not much mend their bruises when himself and fellow creatures come tumbling down neck and heels. It must be a very wide heart that can take in all mankind—and of a very strong fibre to bear so much stretching. Such hearts there are, heaven be thanked!—and all praise to them! Jack's is not of that quality. He is a scalene triangle. He is not a circle! And yet, if he would but let it rest, it is a good heart—a very good heart," continued my father, warming into a tenderness quite infantine, all things considered. "Poor Jack! that was prettily said of him—'That if he were a dog, and he had no home but a dog-kennel, he would turn out to give me the best of the straw!' Poor brother Jack!"

So the discussion was dropped; and, in the meanwhile, Uncle Jack, like the short-faced gentleman in the SPECTATOR, "distinguished himself by a profound silence."

CHAPTER III.

BLANCHE has contrived to associate herself, if not with my more active diversions—in running over the country and making friends with the farmers—still in all my more leisurely and domestic pursuits. There is about her a silent charm that it is very hard to define—but it seems to arise from a kind of innate sympathy with the moods and humors of those she loves. If one is gay, there is a cheerful ring in her silver laugh that seems gladness itself; if one is sad, and creeps away into a corner to bury one's head in one's hands, and muse—by-and-by, and just at the right moment, when one has mused one's fill, and the heart wants something to refresh and restore it, one feels two innocent arms round one's neck—looks up—and lo! Blanche's soft eyes, full of wistful compassionate kindness; though she has the tact not to question—it is enough for her to sorrow with your sorrow—she cares not to know more. A strange child!—fearless, and yet seemingly fond of things that inspire children with fear; fond of tales of fay, sprite, and ghost, which Mrs. Primmins draws fresh and new from her memory, as a conjuror draws pancakes hot and hot from a hat. And yet so sure is Blanche of her own innocence that they never trouble her dreams in her lone little room, full of caliginous corners and nooks, with the winds moaning round the desolate ruins, and the casements rattling hoarse in the dungeon-like wall. She would have no dread to walk through the ghostly keep in the dark, or cross the churchyard, what time,

"By the moon's doubtful and malignant light,"

the grave-stones look so spectral, and the shade from the yew-trees lies so still on the sward. When the brows of Roland are gloomiest, and the compression of his lips makes sorrow look sternest, be sure that Blanche is couched at his feet, waiting the moment when, with some heavy sigh, the muscles relax, and she is sure of the smile if she climbs to his knee. It is pretty to chance on her gliding up broken turret stairs, or standing hushed in the recess of shattered casements, and you wonder what thoughts of vague awe and solemn pleasure can be at work under that still little brow.

She has a quick comprehension of all that is taught to her; she already tasks to the full my mother's educational arts. My father has had to rummage his library for books, to feed (or extinguish) her desire for "farther information;" and has promised lessons in French and Italian—at some golden time in the shadowy "By-and-By"—which are received so gratefully that one might think Blanche mistook *Télémaque* and *Novelle Morali* for baby-houses and dolls. Heaven send her through French and Italian with better success than attended Mr. Caxton's lessons in Greek to Pisistratus! She has an ear for music, which my mother, who is no bad judge, declares to be exquisite. Luckily there is an old Italian settled in a town ten miles off, who is said to be an excellent music-master, and who comes the round of the neighboring squirearchy twice a week. I have taught her to draw—an accomplishment in which I am not without skill—and she has already taken a sketch from nature, which, barring the perspective, is not so amiss; indeed, she has caught the notion of "idealizing" (which promises future originality) from her own natural instincts, and given to the old witch-elm, that hangs over the stream, just the bough that it wanted to dip into the water, and soften off the hard lines. My only fear is, that Blanche should become too dreamy and thoughtful. Poor child, she has no one to play with! So I look out, and get her a dog—frisky and young, who abhors sedentary occupations—a spaniel, small and coal-black, with ears sweeping the ground. I baptize him "Juba," in honor of Addison's Cato, and in consideration of his sable curls and Mauritanian complexion. Blanche does not seem so eerie and elf-like while gliding through the ruins, when Juba barks by her side, and scares the birds from the ivy.

One day I had been pacing to and fro the hall, which was deserted; and the sight of the armor and portraits — dumb evidences of the active and adventurous lives of the old inhabitants, which seemed to reprove my own inactive obscurity—had set me off on one of those Pegaséan hobbies on which youth mounts to the skies—delivering maidens on rocks, and killing Gorgons and monsters—when Juba bounded in, and Blanche came after him, her straw hat in her hand.

BLANCHE.—I thought you were here, Sisty: may I stay?

PISISTRATUS.—Why, my dear child, the day

is so fine that instead of losing it in-doors, you ought to be running in the fields with Juba.

JUBA.—Bow—wow.

BLANCHE.—Will you come too? If Sisty stays in, Blanche does not care for the butterflies!

Pisistratus, seeing that the thread of his day-dreams is broken, consents with an air of resignation. Just as they gain the door, Blanche pauses, and looks as if there were something on her mind.

PISISTRATUS.—What now, Blanche? Why are you making knots in that ribbon, and writing invisible characters on the floor with the point of that busy little foot?

BLANCHE (mysteriously).—I have found a new room, Sisty. Do you think we may look into it?

PISISTRATUS.—Certainly; unless any Bluebeard of your acquaintance told you not. Where is it?

BLANCHE.—Up stairs—to the left.

PISISTRATUS.—That little old door, going down two stone steps, which is always kept locked?

BLANCHE.—Yes! it is not locked to-day. The door was ajar, and I peeped in; but I would not do more till I came and asked you if you thought it would not be wrong.

PISISTRATUS.—Very good in you, my discreet little cousin. I have no doubt it is a ghost-trap; however, with Juba's protection, I think we might venture together.

Pisistratus, Blanche, and Juba ascend the stairs, and turn off down a dark passage to the left, away from the rooms in use. We reach the arch-pointed door of oak planks nailed roughly together—we push it open, and perceive that a small stair winds down from the room: it is just over Roland's chamber.

The room has a damp smell, aud has probably been left open to be aired, for the wind comes through the unbarred casement, and a billet burns on the hearth. The place has that attractive, fascinating air which belongs to a lumber-room, than which I know nothing that so captivates the interest and fancy of young people. What treasures, to them, often lie hid in those quaint odds and ends which the elder generations have discarded as rubbish! All children are by nature antiquarians and relic-hunters. Still there is an order and precision with which the articles in that room are stowed away that belies the true notion of lumber—none of the mildew and dust which give such mournful interest to things abandoned to decay.

In one corner are piled up cases, and military-looking trunks of outlandish aspect, with R. D. C. in brass nails on their sides. From these we turn with involuntary respect, and call off Juba, who has wedged himself behind in pursuit of some imaginary mouse. But in the other corner is what seems to me a child's cradle—not an English one evidently: it is of wood, seemingly Spanish rosewood, with a rail-work at the back, of twisted columns; and I should scarcely have known it to be a cradle but for the fairy-like quilt and the tiny pillows, which proclaimed its uses.

On the wall above the cradle were arranged sundry little articles, that had, perhaps, once made the joy of a child's heart—broken toys with the paint rubbed off, a tin sword and trumpet, and a few tattered books, mostly in Spanish—by their shape and look, doubtless children's books. Near these stood, on the floor, a picture with its face to the wall. Juba had chased the mouse that his fancy still insisted on creating, behind this picture, and, as he abruptly drew back, the picture fell into the hands I stretched forth to receive it. I turned the face to the light, and was surprised to see merely an old family portrait; it was that of a gentleman in the flowered vest and stiff ruff which referred the date of his existence to the reign of Elizabeth—a man with a bold and noble countenance. On the corner was placed a faded coat of arms, beneath which was inscribed, "HERBEBT DE CAXTON, EQ: AUR: ÆTAT: 35."

On the back of the canvas I observed, as I now replaced the picture against the wall, a label in Roland's handwriting, though in a younger and more running hand than he now wrote. The words were these:—"The best and bravest of our line. He charged by Sidney's side on the field of Zutphen; he fought in Drake's ship against the armament of Spain. If ever I have a——" The rest of the label seemed to have been torn off.

I turned away, and felt a remorseful shame that I had so far gratified my curiosity,—if by so harsh a name the powerful interest that had absorbed me must be called. I looked round for Blanche; she had retreated from my side to the door, and, with her hands before her

eyes, was weeping. As I stole towards her, my glance fell on a book that lay on a chair near the casement, and beside those relics of an infancy once pure and serene. By the old-fashioned silver clasps I recognized Roland's Bible. I felt as if I had been almost guilty of profanation in my thoughtless intrusion. I drew away Blanche, and we descended the stairs noiselessly; and not till we were on our favorite spot, amidst a heap of ruins on the feudal justice-hill, did I seek to kiss away her tears and ask the cause.

"My poor brother!" sobbed Blanche, "they must have been his—and we shall never, never see him again!—and poor papa's Bible, which he reads when he is very, very sad! I did not weep enough when my brother died. I know better what death is now! Poor papa! poor papa! Don't die, too, Sisty!"

There was no running after butterflies that morning; and it was long before I could soothe Blanche. Indeed, she bore the traces of dejection in her soft looks for many, many days; and she often asked me, sighingly, "Don't you think it was very wrong in me to take you there?" Poor little Blanche, true daughter of Eve, she would not let me bear my due share of the blame; she would have it all in Adam's primitive way of justice—"The woman tempted me, and I did eat." And since then Blanche has seemed more fond than ever of Roland, and comparatively deserts me to nestle close to him, and closer, till he looks up and says, "My child, you are pale; go and run after the butterflies;" and she says now to him, not to me—"Come too!" drawing him out into the sunshine with a hand that will not loose its hold.

Of all Roland's line, this Herbert de Caxton was "the best and bravest!" yet he had never named that ancestor to me—never put any forefather in comparison with the dubious and mythical Sir William. I now remembered once, that, in going over the pedigree, I had been struck by the name of Herbert—the only Herbert in the scroll—and had asked, "What of him, uncle?" and Roland had muttered something inaudible, and turned away. And I remembered, also, that in Roland's room there was the mark in the wall where a picture of that size had once hung. The picture had been removed thence before we first came, but must have hung there for years to have left that mark on the wall;—perhaps suspended by Bolt, during Roland's long continental absence. "If ever I have a"—— What were the missing words? Alas! did they not relate to the son—missed for ever, evidently not forgotten still?

CHAPTER IV.

My uncle sat on one side of the fire-place, my mother on the other; and I, at a small table between them, prepared to note down the results of their conference; for they had met in high council, to assess their joint fortunes—determine what should be brought into the common stock, and set apart for the Civil List, and what should be laid aside as a Sinking-Fund. Now my mother, true woman as she was, had a womanly love of show in her own quiet way—of making "a genteel figure" in the eyes of the neighborhood—of seeing that sixpence not only went as far as sixpence ought to go, but that, in the going, it should emit a mild but imposing splendor—not, indeed, a gaudy flash—a startling Borealian coruscation, which is scarcely within the modest and placid idiosyncrasies of sixpence—but a gleam of gentle and benign light, just to show where a sixpence had been, and allow you time to say "Behold!" before

"The jaws of darkness did devour it up."

Thus, as I once before took occasion to apprise the reader, we had always held a very respectable position in the neighborhood round our square brick house; been as sociable as my father's habits would permit; given our little tea-parties, and our occasional dinners, and, without attempting to vie with our richer associates, there had always been so exquisite a neatness, so notable a housekeeping, so thoughtful a disposition, in short, of all the properties indigenous to a well-spent sixpence, in my mother's management, that there was not an old maid within seven miles of us who did not pronounce our tea-parties to be perfect; and the great Mrs. Rollick, who gave forty guineas a-year to a professed cook and housekeeper, used regularly, whenever we dined at Rollick Hall, to call across the table to my mother (who therewith blushed up to her ears), to apologize for the strawberry jelly. It is

true, that when, on returning home, my mother adverted to that flattering and delicate compliment, in a tone that revealed the self-conceit of the human heart, my father—whether to sober his Kitty's vanity into a proper and Christian mortification of spirit, or from that strange shrewdness which belonged to him—would remark that Mrs. Rollick was of a querulous nature; that the compliment was meant not to please my mother, but to spite the professed cook and housekeeper, to whom the butler would be sure to repeat the invidious apology.

In settling at the Tower, and assuming the head of its establishment, my mother was naturally anxious that, poor battered invalid though the Tower was, it should still put its best leg foremost. Sundry cards, despite the thinness of the neighborhood, had been left at the door; various invitations, which my uncle had hitherto declined, had greeted his occupation of the ancestral ruin, and had become more numerous since the news of our arrival had gone abroad; so that my mother saw before her a very suitable field for her hospitable accomplishments—a reasonable ground for her ambition that the Tower should hold up its head, as became a Tower that held the head of the family.

But not to wrong thee, O dear mother! as thou sittest there, opposite the grim Captain, so fair and so neat,—with thine apron as white, and thy hair as trim and as sheen, and thy morning cap, with its ribbons of blue, as coquettishly arranged as if thou hadst a fear that the least negligence on thy part might lose thee the heart of thine Austin—not to wrong thee by setting down to frivolous motives alone thy feminine visions of the social amenities of life, I know that thine heart, in its provident tenderness, was quite as much interested as ever thy vanities could be, in the hospitable thoughts on which thou wert intent. For, first and foremost, it was the wish of thy soul that thine Austin might, as little as possible, be reminded of the change in his fortunes,—might miss as little as possible those interruptions to his abstracted scholarly moods, at which, it is true, he used to fret and to pshaw and to cry Papæ! but which nevertheless always did him good, and freshened up the stream of his thoughts. And, next, it was the conviction of thine understanding that a little society, and boon companionship, and the proud pleasure of showing his ruins, and presiding at the hall of his forefathers, would take Roland out of those gloomy reveries into which he still fell at times. And, thirdly, for us young people ought not Blanche to find companions in children of her own sex and age? Already in those large black eyes there was something melancholy and brooding, as there is in the eyes of all children who live only with their elders; and for Pisistratus, with his altered prospects, and the one great gnawing memory at his heart—which he tried to conceal from himself, but which a mother (and a mother who had loved) saw at a glance—what could be better than such union and interchange with the world around us, small though that world might be, as woman, sweet binder and blender of all social links, might artfully effect?—So that thou didst not go, like the awful Florentine,

"Sopra lor vanita che par persona,"

"over thin shadows that mocked the substance of real forms," but rather it was the real forms that appeared as shadows or *vanita*.

What a digression!—can I never tell my story in a plain straightforward way? Certainly I was born under Cancer, and all my movements are circumlocutory, sideways, and crablike.

CHAPTER V.

"I THINK, Roland," said my mother, "that the establishment is settled. Bolt, who is equal to three men at least; Primmins, cook and housekeeper; Molly, a good stirring girl—and willing (though I've had some difficulty in persuading her to submit not to be called Anna Maria!). Their wages are but a small item, my dear Roland."

"Hem!" said Roland, "since we can't do with fewer servants at less wages, I suppose we must call it small."

"It is so," said my mother, with mild positiveness. "And, indeed, what with the game and fish, and the garden and poultry-yard, and your own mutton, our housekeeping will be next to nothing."

"Hem!" again said the thrifty Roland, with a slight inflection of the beetle brows. "It may be next to nothing, ma'am—sister—just

as a butcher's shop may be next to Northumberland House, but there is a vast deal between nothing and that next neighbor you have given it."

This speech was so like one of my father's—so *naïve* an imitation of that subtle reasoner's use of the rhetorical figure called ANTANACLASIS (or repetition of the same words in a different sense), that I laughed and my mother smiled. But she smiled reverently, not thinking of the ANTANACLASIS, as, laying her hand on Roland's arm, she replied in the yet more formidable figure of speech called EPIPHONEMA (or exclamation), "Yet, with all your economy, you would have had us—"

"Tut!" cried my uncle, parrying the EPIPHONEMA with a masterly APOSIOPESIS (or breaking off); "tut! if you had done what I wished, I should have had more pleasure for my money!"

My poor mother's rhetorical armory supplied no weapon to meet that artful APOSIOPESIS; so she dropped the rhetoric altogether, and went on with that "unadorned eloquence" natural to her, as to other great financial reformers:—"Well, Roland, but I am a good housewife, I assure you, and—don't scold; but that you never do,—I mean, don't look as if you would like to scold; the fact is, that, even after setting aside £100 a-year for our little parties—"

"Little parties!—a hundred a-year!" cried the Captain aghast.

My mother pursued her way remorselessly,—"Which we can well afford; and without counting your half-pay, which you must keep for pocket-money and your wardrobe and Blanche's, I calculate that we can allow Pisistratus £150 a-year, which, with the scholarship he is to get, will keep him at Cambridge" (at that, seeing the scholarship was as yet amidst the Pleasures of Hope, I shook my head doubtfully); "and," continued my mother, not heeding that sign of dissent, "we shall still have something to lay by."

The Captain's face assumed a ludicrous expression of compassion and horror; he evidently thought my mother's misfortunes had turned her head.

His tormentor continued.

"For," said my mother, with a pretty calculating shake of her head, and a movement of the right forefinger towards the five fingers of the left hand, "£370—the interest of Austin's fortune—and £50 that we may reckon for the rent of our house, make £420 a-year. Add your £330 a-year from the farm, sheep-walk, and cottages that you let, and the total is £750. Now, with all we get for nothing for our housekeeping, as I said before, we can do very well with £500 a-year, and indeed make a handsome figure. So, after allowing Sisty £150, we still have £100 to lay by for Blanche."

"Stop, stop, stop!" cried the Captain, in great agitation; "who told you that I had £330 a-year?

"Why, Bolt,—don't be angry with him."

"Bolt is a blockhead. From £330 a-year take £200, and the remainder is all my income, besides my half-pay."

My mother opened her eyes, and so did I.

"To that £130 add, if you please, £130 of your own. All that you have over, my dear sister, is yours or Austin's, or your boy's; but not a shilling can go to give luxuries to a miserly, battered old soldier. Do you understand me?"

"No, Roland," said my mother, "I don't understand you at all. Does not your property bring in £330 a-year?"

"Yes, but it has a debt of £200 a year on it," said the Captain, gloomily and reluctantly.

"Oh, Roland!" cried my mother, tenderly, and approaching so near that, had my father been in the room, I am sure she would have been bold enough to kiss the stern Captain, though I never saw him look sterner and less kissable. "Oh, Roland!" cried my mother, concluding that famous EPIPHONEMA which my uncle's APOSIOPESIS had before nipped in the bud, "and yet you would have made us, who are twice as rich, rob you of this little all!"

"Ah!" said Roland, trying to smile, "but I should have had my own way then, and starved you shockingly. No talk then of 'little parties,' and such-like. But you must not now turn the tables against me, nor bring your £420 a year as a set-off to my £130."

"Why," said my mother, generously, "you forget the money's worth that you contribute—all that your grounds supply, and all that we save by it. I am sure that that's worth a yearly £300 at the least."

"Madam—sister," said the Captain, "I'm sure you don't want to hurt my feelings. All I have to say is, that, if you add to what I

bring an equal sum—to keep up the poor old ruin—it is the utmost that I can allow, and the rest is not more than Pisistratus can spend."

So saying, the Captain rose, bowed, and, before either of us could stop him, hobbled out of the room.

"Dear me, Sisty!" said my mother, wringing her hands, "I have certainly displeased him. How could I guess he had so large a debt on the property?"

"Did not he pay his son's debts? Is not that the reason that—"

"Ah!" interrupted my mother, almost crying, "and it was that which ruffled him, and I not to guess it? What shall I do?"

"Set to work at a new calculation, dear mother, and let him have his own way."

"But then," said my mother, "your uncle will mope himself to death, and your father will have no relaxation, while you see that he has lost his former object in his books. And Blanche—and you too. If we were only to contribute what dear Roland does, I do not see how, with £260 a-year, we could ever bring our neighbors round us! I wonder what Austin would say! I have half a mind—no, I'll go and look over the week-books with Primmons."

My mother went her way sorrowfully, and I was left alone.

Then I looked on the stately old hall, grand in its forlorn decay. And the dreams I had begun to cherish at my heart swept over me, and hurried me along, far, far away into the golden land, whither Hope beckons youth. To restore my father's fortunes—re-weave the links of that broken ambition which had knit his genius with the world—rebuild those fallen walls—cultivate those barren moors—revive the ancient name—glad the old soldier's age—and be to *both* the brothers what Roland had lost—a son! These were my dreams; and when I woke from them, lo! they had left behind an intense purpose, a resolute object. Dream, O youth!—dream manfully and nobly, and thy dreams shall be prophets!

CHAPTER VI.

LETTER FROM PISISTRATUS CAXTON, TO ALBERT TREVANION, ESQ., M.P.

(*The confession of a youth who in the Old World finds himself one too many.*)

"My dear Mr. Trevanion,—I thank you cordially, and so we do all, for your reply to my letter, informing you of the villanous traps through which we have passed—not indeed with whole skins, but still whole in life and limb—which, considering that the traps were three, and the teeth sharp, was more than we could reasonably expect. We have taken to the wastes, like wise foxes as we are, and I do not think a bait can be found that will again snare the fox paternal. As for the fox filial, it is different, and I am about to prove to you that he is burning to redeem the family disgrace. Ah! my dear Mr. Trevanion, if you are busy with 'blue-books' when this letter reaches you, stop here, and put it aside for some rare moment of leisure. I am about to open my heart to you, and ask you, who know the world so well, to aid me in an escape from those *flammantia mœnia*, wherewith I find that world begirt and enclosed. For look you, sir, you and my father were right when you both agreed that the mere book-life was not meant for me. And yet what is not book-life, to a young man who would make his way through the ordinary and conventional paths to fortune? All the professions are so book-lined, book-hemmed, book-choked, that wherever these strong hands of mine stretch towards action, they find themselves met by octavo ramparts, flanked with quarto crenellations. For first, this college life, opening to scholarships, and ending, perchance, as you political economists would desire, in Malthusian fellowships—premiums for celibacy—consider what manner of thing it is!

"Three years, book upon book,—a great Dead Sea before one, three years long, and all the apples that grow on the shore full of the ashes of pica and primer! Those three years ended, the fellowship, it may be won,—still books—books—if the whole world does not close at the college gates. Do I, from scholar, effloresce into literary man, author by profession?—books—books! Do I go into the law?—books—books. *Ars longa, vita brevis*, which, paraphrased, means that it is slow work before

one fags one's way to a brief? Do I turn doctor? Why, what but books can kill time, until, at the age of forty, a lucky chance may permit me to kill something else? The church (for which, indeed, I don't profess to be good enough),—that is book-life *par excellence*, whether, inglorious and poor, I wander through long lines of divines and fathers; or, ambitious of bishoprics, I amend the corruptions, not of the human heart, but of a Greek text, and through defiles of scholiasts and commentators win my way to the See. In short, barring the noble profession of arms—which you know, after all, is not precisely the road to fortune—can you tell me any means by which one may escape these eternal books, this mental clock-work, and corporeal lethargy? Where can this passion for life that runs riot through my veins find its vent? Where can these stalwart limbs, and this broad chest, grow of value and worth, in this hot-bed of cerebral inflammation and dyspeptic intellect? I know what is in me; I know I have the qualities that should go with stalwart limbs and broad chest. I have some plain common sense, some promptitude and keenness, some pleasure in hardy danger, some fortitude in bearing pain—qualities for which I bless Heaven, for they are qualities good and useful in private life. But in the forum of men, in the market of fortune, are they not *flocci, nauci, nihili?*

"In a word, dear sir and friend, in this crowded Old World, there is not the same room that our bold forefathers found for men to walk about, and jostle their neighbors. No; they must sit down like boys at their form, and work out their tasks, with rounded shoulders and aching fingers. There has been a pastoral age, and a hunting age, and a fighting age. Now we have arrived at the age sedentary. Men who sit longest carry all before them: puny delicate fellows, with hands just strong enough to wield a pen, eyes so bleared by the midnight lamp that they see no joy in that buxom sun (which draws me forth into the fields, as life draws the living), and digestive organs worn and macerated by the relentless flagellation of the brain. Certainly, if this is to be the Reign of Mind, it is idle to repine, and kick against the pricks; but is it true that all these qualities of action that are within me are to go for nothing? If I were rich and happy in mind and circumstance, well and good; I should shoot, hunt, farm, travel, enjoy life, and snap my fingers at ambition. If I were so poor and so humbly bred that I could turn gamekeeper or whipper-in, as pauper gentlemen virtually did of old, well and good too; I should exhaust this troublesome vitality of mine, by nightly battles with poachers, and leaps over double dykes and stone walls. If I were so depressed of spirit that I could live without remorse on my father's small means, and exclaim with Claudian, 'The earth gives me feasts that cost nothing,' well and good too; it were a life to suit a vegetable, or a very minor poet. But as it is!—here I open another leaf of my heart to you! To say that, being poor, I want to make a fortune, is to say that I am an Englishman. To attach ourselves to a thing positive, belongs to our practical race. Even in our dreams, if we build castles in the air, they are not *Castles of Indolence*,—indeed they have very little of the castle about them, and look much more like Hoare's Bank on the east side of Temple Bar! I desire, then, to make a fortune. But I differ from my countrymen, first, by desiring only what you rich men would call but a *small* fortune; secondly, in wishing that I may not spend my whole life in that fortune-making. Just see, now, how I am placed.

"Under ordinary circumstances, I must begin by taking from my father a large slice of an income that will ill spare paring. According to my calculation, my parents and my uncle want all they have got—and the subtraction of the yearly sum on which Pisistratus is to live, till he can live by his own labors, would be so much taken from the decent comforts of his kindred. If I return to Cambridge, with all economy, I must thus narrow still more the *res angusta domi*—and when Cambridge is over, and I am turned loose upon the world—failing, as is likely enough, of the support of a fellowship—how many years must I work, or rather, alas! not work, at the bar (which, after all, seems my best calling), before I can in my turn provide for those who, till then, rob themselves for me?—till I have arrived at middle life, and they are old and worn out—till the chink of the golden bowl sounds but hollow at the ebbing well! I would wish that, if I can make money, those I love best may enjoy it while enjoyment is yet left to them; that my father shall see *The History of*

Human Error complete, bound in russia on his shelves; that my mother shall have the innocent pleasures that content her, before age steals the light from her happy smile; that before Roland's hair is snow-white (alas! the snows there thicken fast), he shall lean on my arm, while we settle together where the ruin shall be repaired or where left to the owls; and where the dreary bleak waste around shall laugh with the gleam of corn:—for you know the nature of this Cumberland soil—you, who possess much of it, and have won so many fair acres from the wild:—you know that my uncle's land, now (save a single farm) scarce worth a shilling an acre, needs but capital to become an estate more lucrative than ever his ancestors owned. You know that, for you have applied your capital to the same kind of land, and, in doing so, what blessings—which you scarcely think of in your London library—you have effected!—what mouths you feed, what hands you employ! I have calculated that my uncle's moors, which now scarce maintain two or three shepherds, could, manured by money, maintain two hundred families by their labor. All this is worth trying for! therefore Pisistratus wants to make money. Not so much! he does not require millions—a few spare thousand pounds would go a long way; and with a modest capital to begin with, Roland should become a true Squire, a real landowner, not the mere lord of a desert. Now then, dear sir, advise me how I may, with such qualities as I possess, arrive at that capital—ay, and before it is too late—so that money-making may not last till my grave.

"Turning in despair from this civilized world of ours, I have cast my eyes to a world far older,—and yet more to a world in its giant childhood. India here,—Australia there!—what say you, sir—you who will see dispassionately those things that float before my eyes through a golden haze, looming large in the distance? Such is my confidence in your judgment, that you have but to say, 'Fool, give up thine El Dorados and stay at home—stick to the books and the desk—annihilate that redundance of animal life that is in thee—grow a mental machine—thy physical gifts are of no avail to thee—take thy place among the slaves of the Lamp'—and I will obey without a murmur. But if I am right—if I have in me attributes that here find no market; if my repinings are but the instincts of nature, that, out of this decrepit civilization, desire vent for growth in the young stir of some more rude and vigorous social system—then give me, I pray, that advice which may clothe my idea in some practical and tangible embodiments. Have I made myself understood?

"We take no newspaper here, but occasionally one finds its way from the parsonage; and I have lately rejoiced at a paragraph that spoke of your speedy entrance into the administration as a thing certain. I write to you before you are a minister; and you see what I seek is not in the way of official patronage: A niche in an office!—oh, to me that were worse than all. Yet I did labor hard with you, but—*that* was different! I write to you thus frankly, knowing your warm noble heart—and as if you were my father. Allow me to add my humble but earnest congratulations on Miss Trevanion's approaching marriage with one worthy, if not of her, at least of her station. I do so as becomes one whom you have allowed to retain the right to pray for the happiness of you and yours.

"My dear Mr. Trevanion, this is a long letter, and I dare not even read it over, lest, if I do, I should not send it. Take it with all its faults, and judge of it with that kindness with which you have judged ever

"Your grateful and devoted servant,

"PISISTRATUS CAXTON."

LETTER FROM ALBERT TREVANION, ESQ. M.P., TO PISISTRATUS CAXTON.

Library of the House of Commons, Tuesday night.

"MY DEAR PISISTRATUS,—* * * * * is up! we are in for it for two mortal hours. I take flight to the library, and devote those hours to you. Don't be conceited, but that picture of yourself which you have placed before me has struck me with all the force of an original. The state of mind which you describe so vividly must be a very common one, in our era of civilization, yet I have never before seen it made so prominent and life-like. You have been in my thoughts all day. Yes, how many young men must there be like you, in this Old World, able, intelligent, active, and persevering enough, yet not adapted for success in any of

our conventional professions—'mute, inglorious Raleighs.' Your letter, young artist, is an illustration of the philosophy of colonizing. I comprehend better, after reading it, the old Greek colonization,—the sending out not only the paupers, the refuse of an over-populated state, but a large proportion of a better class—fellows full of pith and sap, and exuberant vitality, like yourself, blending, in those wise *cleruchiæ*, a certain portion of the aristocratic with the more democratic element; not turning a rabble loose upon a new soil, but planting in the foreign allotments all the rudiments of a harmonious state, analogous to that in the mother country—not only getting rid of hungry craving mouths, but furnishing vent for a waste surplus of intelligence and courage, which at home is really not needed, and more often comes to ill than to good;—here only menaces our artificial embankments, but there, carried off in an aqueduct, might give life to a desert.

"For my part, in my ideal of colonization, I should like that each exportation of human beings had, as of old, its leaders and chiefs—not so appointed from the mere quality of rank, often, indeed, taken from the humbler classes—but still men to whom a certain degree of education should give promptitude, quickness, *adaptability*—men in whom their followers can confide. The Greeks understood that. Nay, as the colony makes progress—as its principal town rises into the dignity of a capital—a *polis* that needs a polity—I sometimes think it might be wise to go still farther, and not only transplant to it a high standard of civilization, but draw it more closely into connection with the parent state, and render the passage of spare intellect, education, and *civility*, to and fro, more facile, by drafting off thither the spare scions of royalty itself. I know that many of my more 'liberal' friends would pooh-pooh this notion; but I am sure that the colony altogether, when arrived to a state that would bear the importation, would thrive all the better for it. And when the day shall come (as to all healthful colonies it must come sooner or later) in which the settlement has grown an independent state, we may thereby have laid the seeds of a constitution and a civilization similar to our own—with self-developed forms of monarchy and aristocracy, though of a simpler growth than old societies accept, and not left a strange motley chaos of struggling democracy—an uncouth livid giant, at which the Frankenstein may well tremble—not because it is a giant, but because it is a giant half completed.* Depend on it, the New World will be friendly or hostile to the Old, *not in proportion to the kinship of race, but in proportion to the similarity of manners and institutions*—a mighty truth to which we colonizers have been blind.

"Passing from these more distant speculations to this positive present before us, you see already, from what I have said, that I sympathize with your aspirations—that I construe them as you would have me;—looking to your nature and to your objects, I give you my advice in a word—EMIGRATE!

"My advice is, however, founded on one hypothesis—viz., that you are perfectly sincere—you will be contented with a rough life, and with a moderate fortune at the end of your probation. Don't dream of emigrating if you want to make a million, or the tenth part of a million. Don't dream of emigrating, unless you can *enjoy* its hardships,—to *bear* them is not enough!

"Australia is the land for you, as you seem to surmise. Australia is the land for two classes of emigrants: 1st, The man who has nothing but his wits, and plenty of them; 2dly, The man who has a small capital, and who is contented to spend ten years in trebling it. I assume that you belong to the latter class. Take out £3,000, and, before you are thirty years old, you may return with £10,000 or £12,000. If that satisfies you, think seriously of Australia. By coach, to-morrow, I will send you down all the best books and reports on the subject; and I will get you what detailed information I can from the Colonial Office. Having read these, and thought over them dispassionately, spend some months yet among the sheep-walks of Cumberland; learn all you can, from all the shepherds you can find—from Thyrsis to Menalcas. Do more; fit yourself in every way for a life in the Bush; where the philosophy of the division of labor is not yet

* These pages were sent to press before the author had seen Mr. Wakefield's recent work on Colonization, wherein the views here expressed are enforced with great earnestness and conspicuous sagacity. The author is not the less pleased at this coincidence of opinion, because he has the misfortune to dissent from certain other parts of Mr. Wakefield's elaborate theory.

arrived at. Learn to turn your hand to everything. Be something of a smith, something of a carpenter—do the best you can with the fewest tools; make yourself an excellent shot; break in all the wild horses and ponies you can borrow and beg. Even if you want to do none of these things when in your settlement, the having learned to do them will fit you for many other things not now foreseen. *De-fine-gentlemanise* yourself from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, and become the greater aristocrat for so doing; for he is more than an aristocrat, he is a king, who suffices in all things for himself—who is his own master, because he wants no *valetaille*. I think Seneca has expressed that thought before me; and I would quote the passage, but the book, I fear, is not in the library of the House of Commons. But now—(cheers, by Jove! I suppose * * * * * is down! Ah! it is so; and C—— is up, and that cheer followed a sharp hit at me. How I wish I were your age, and going to Australia with you!) But now—to resume my suspended period—but now to the important point—capital. You must take that, unless you go as a shepherd, and then good-by to the idea of £10,000 in ten years. So, you see, it appears at the first blush that you must still come to your father; but, you will say, with this difference, that you borrow the capital with every chance of repaying it instead of frittering away the income year after year till you are eight-and-thirty or forty at least. Still, Pisistratus, you don't, in this, gain your object at a leap; and my dear old friend ought not to lose his son and his money too. You say you write to me as to your own father. You know I hate professions; and if you did not mean what you say, you have offended me mortally. As a father, then, I take a father's rights, and speak plainly. A friend of mine, Mr. Bolding, a clergyman, has a son—a wild fellow, who is likely to get into all sorts of scrapes in England, but with plenty of good in him, notwithstanding—frank, bold—not wanting in talent, but rather in prudence—easily tempted and led away into extravagance. He would make a capital colonist, (no such temptations in the Bush!) if tied to a youth like you. Now I propose, with your leave, that his father shall advance him £1500, which shall not, however, be placed in his hands, but in yours, as head partner in the firm. You, on your side, shall advance the same sum of £1500, which you shall borrow from me, for three years without interest. At the end of that time interest shall commence, and the capital, with the interest on the said first three years, shall be repaid to me, or my executors, on your return. After you have been a year or two in the Bush, and felt your way, and learned your business, you may then safely borrow £1500 more from your father; and, in the meanwhile, you and your partner will have had together the full sum of £3000 to commence with. You see in this proposal I make you no gift, and I run no risk, even by your death. If you die insolvent, I will promise to come on your father, poor fellow!—for small joy and small care will he have then in what may be left of his fortune. There—I have said all; and I will never forgive you if you reject an aid that will serve you so much, and cost me so little.

"I accept your congratulations on Fanny's engagement with Lord Castleton. When you return from Australia you will still be a young man, she (though about your own years) almost a middle-aged woman, with her head full of pomps and vanities. All girls have a short period of girlhood in common; but when they enter womanhood, the woman becomes the woman of her class. As for me, and the office assigned to me by report, you know what I said when we parted, and—but here J—— comes, and tells me that 'I am expected to speak, and answer N——, who is just up, brimful of malice,'—the House crowded, and hungering for personalities. So I, the man of the Old World, gird up my loins, and leave you with a sigh, to the fresh youth of the New—

'Ne tibi sit duros acuisse in prœlia dentes.'

"Yours affectionately,
"ALBERT TREVANION."

CHAPTER VII.

So, reader, thou art now at the secret of my heart.

Wonder not that I, a bookman's son, and, at certain periods of my life, a bookman myself, though of lowly grade in that venerable class—wonder not that I should thus, in that transition stage between youth and manhood, have turned impatiently from books.—Most students,

at one time or other in their existence, have felt the imperious demand of that restless principle in man's nature, which calls upon each son of Adam to contribute his share to the vast treasury of human deeds. And though great scholars are not necessarily, nor usually, men of action,—yet the men of action whom History presents to our survey, have rarely been without a certain degree of scholarly nurture. For the ideas which books quicken, books cannot always satisfy. And though the royal pupil of Aristotle slept with Homer under his pillow, it was not that he might dream of composing epics, but of conquering new Ilions in the East. Many a man, how little soever resembling Alexander, may still have the conqueror's aim in an object that action only can achieve, and the book under his pillow may be the strongest antidote to his repose. And how the stern Destinies that shall govern the man weave their first delicate tissues amidst the earliest associations of the child !—Those idle tales with which the old credulous nurse had beguiled my infancy—tales of wonder, knight-errantry, and adventure, had left behind them seeds long latent—seeds that might never have sprung up above the soil—but that my boyhood was so early put under the burning-glass, and in the quick forcing-house, of the London world. There, even amidst books and study, lively observation and petulant ambition broke forth from the lush foliage of romance—that fruitless leafiness of poetic youth ! And there passion, which is a revolution in all the elements of individual man, had called a new state of being, turbulent and eager, out of the old habits and conventional forms it had buried —ashes that speak where the fire has been. Far from me, as from any mind of some manliness, be the attempt to create interest by dwelling at length on the struggles against a rash and misplaced attachment, which it was my duty to overcome; but all such love, as I have before implied, is a terrible unsettler:—

> "Where once such fairies dance, no grass doth ever grow."

To re-enter boyhood, go with meek docility through its disciplined routine—how hard had I found that return, amidst the cloistered monotony of college ! My love for my father, and my submission to his wish, had indeed given some animation to objects otherwise distasteful; but, now that my return to the University must be attended with positive privation to those at home, the idea became utterly hateful and repugnant. Under pretence that I found myself, on trial, not yet sufficiently prepared to do credit to my father's name, I had easily obtained leave to lose the ensuing college term, and pursue my studies at home. This gave me time to prepare my plans, and bring round—how shall I ever bring round to my adventurous views those whom I propose to desert ? Hard it is to get on in the world—very hard ! But the most painful step in the way is that which starts from the threshold of a beloved home.

How—ah, how, indeed ! "No, Blanche, you cannot join me to-day; I am going out for many hours. So it will be late before I can be home."

Home !—the word chokes me ! Juba slinks back to his young mistress, disconsolate. Blanche gazes at me ruefully from our favorite hill-top, and the flowers she has been gathering fall unheeded from her basket. I hear my mother's voice singing low, as she sits at work by her open casement. How—ah, how, indeed !

PART THIRTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

St. Chrysostom, in his work on The Priesthood, defends deceit, if for a good purpose, by many Scriptural examples; ends his first book by asserting that it is often necessary, and that much benefit may arise from it; and begins his second book by saying that it ought not to be called *deceit*, but "*good management*." *

Good management, then, let me call the innocent arts by which I now sought to insinuate my project into favor and assent with my unsuspecting family. At first I began with Roland. I easily induced him to read some of the books, full of the charm of Australian life, which Trevanion had sent me; and, so happily did those descriptions suit his own erratic tastes, and the free half-savage man that lay rough and large within that soldierly nature, that he himself, as it were, seemed to suggest my own ardent desire—sighed, as the careworn Trevanion had done, that "he was not my age," and blew the flame that consumed me with his own willing breath. So that when at last—wandering one day over the wild moors—I said, knowing his hatred of law and lawyers—

"Alas, uncle, that nothing should be left for me but the bar!"

Captain Roland struck his cane into the peat, and exclaimed, "Zounds, sir! the bar and lying, with truth and a world fresh from God before you!"

"Your hand, uncle—we understand each other. Now help me with those two quiet hearts at home!"

"Plague on my tongue! what have I done?" said the Captain, looking aghast. Then, after musing a little time, he turned his dark eye on me, and growled out, "I suspect, young sir, you have been laying a trap for me; and I have fallen into it, like an old fool as I am."

"Oh, sir, if you prefer the bar!"—

"Rogue!"

"Or, indeed, I might perhaps get a clerkship in a merchant's office?"

"If you do, I will scratch you out of the pedigree!"

"Huzza, then, for Australasia!"

"Well, well, well," said my uncle,

"With a smile on his lip, and a tear in his eye;"

"the old sea-king's blood will force its way—a soldier or a rover, there is no other choice for you. We shall mourn and miss you; but who can chain the young eagles to the eyrie?"

I had a harder task with my father, who at first seemed to listen to me as if I had been talking of an excursion to the moon. But I threw in a dexterous dose of the old Greek *Cleruchiæ*—cited by Trevanion—which set him off full trot on his hobby, till after a short excursion to Eubœa and the Chersonese, he was fairly lost amidst the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor. I then gradually and artfully decoyed him into his favorite science of Ethnology; and, while he was speculating on the origin of the American savages, and considering the rival claims of Cimmerians, Israelites, and Scandinavians, I said quietly,—"And you, sir, who think that all human improvement depends on the mixture of races—you, whose whole theory is an absolute sermon upon emigration, and the transplanting and interpolity of our species—you, sir, should be the last man to chain your son, your elder son, to the soil, while your younger is the very missionary of rovers."

"Pisistratus," said my father, "you reason by *synecdoche*—ornamental but illogical;" and

* Hohler's Translation.

therewith, resolved to hear no more, my father rose and retreated into his study.

But his observation, now quickened, began from that day to follow my moods and humors —then he himself grew silent and thoughtful, and finally he took to long conferences with Roland. The result was that, one evening in spring, as I lay listless amidst the weeds and fern that sprang up through the melancholy ruins, I felt a hand on my shoulder; and my father, seating himself beside me on a fragment of stone, said earnestly—"Pisistratus, let us talk —I had hoped better things from your study of Robert Hall."

"Nay, dear father, the medicine did me great good: I have not repined since, and I look steadfastly and cheerfully on life. But Robert Hall fulfilled his mission, and I would fulfil mine."

"Is there no mission in thy native land, O planeticose and exallotriote spirit?" * asked my father, with compassionate rebuke.

"Alas, yes! But what the impulse of genius is to the great, the instinct of vocation is to the mediocre. In every man there is a magnet; in that thing which the man can do best there is a loadstone."

"Papæ!" said my father, opening his eyes; "and are no loadstones to be found for you nearer than the Great Australasian Bight?"

"Ah, sir, if you resort to irony I can say no more!" My father looked down on me tenderly, as I hung my head, moody and abashed.

"Son," said he, "do you think that there is any real jest at my heart, when the matter discussed is whether you are to put wide seas and long years between us?" I pressed nearer to his side, and made no answer.

"But I have noted you of late," continued my father, "and I have observed that your old studies are grown distasteful to you; and I have talked with Roland, and I see that your desire is deeper than a boy's mere whim. And then I have asked myself what prospect I can hold out at home to induce you to be contented here, and I see none; and therefore I should say to you, 'Go thy ways, and God shield thee'—but, Pisistratus, *your mother!*"

"Ah, sir, that is indeed the question! and there indeed I shrink. But, after all, whatever I were—whether toiling at the bar, or in some public office—I should be still so much from home and her. And then you, sir—she loves *you* so entirely, that"——

"No," interrupted my father; "you can advance no arguments like these to touch a mother's heart. There is but one argument that comes home there—is it for your good to leave her? If so, there will be no need of further words. But let us not decide that question hastily; let you and I be together the next two months. Bring your books and sit with me; when you want to go out, tap me on the shoulder, and say 'Come.' At the end of those two months I will say to you 'Go,' or 'Stay.' And you will trust me; and if I say the last, you will submit?"

"Oh yes, sir—yes!"

CHAPTER II.

This compact made, my father roused himself from all his studies—devoted his whole thoughts to me—sought with all his gentle wisdom to wean me imperceptibly from my one fixed tyrannical idea, ranged through his wide pharmacy of books for such medicaments as might alter the system of my thoughts. And little thought he that his very tenderness and wisdom worked against him, for at each new instance of either my heart called aloud, "Is it not that thy tenderness may be repaid, and thy wisdom be known abroad, that I go from thee into the strange land, O my father!"

And the two months expired, and my father saw that the magnet had turned unalterably to the loadstone in the great Australasian Bight: and he said to me, "Go, and comfort your mother. I have told her your wish, and authorized it by my consent, for I believe now that it *is* for your good."

I found my mother in the little room she had appropriated to herself next my father's study. And in that room there was a pathos which I have no words to express; for my mother's meek, gentle, womanly soul spoke there, so that it was the Home of Home. The care with which she had transplanted from the brick house, and lovingly arranged, all the humble memorials of old times, dear

* Words coined by Mr. Caxton from πλανητικός, disposed to roaming, and ἐξαλλοτιόω, to export, to alienate.

to her affections—the black silhouette of my father's profile cut in paper, in the full pomp of academics, cap and gown, (how had he ever consented to sit for it!) framed and glazed in the place of honor over the little hearth; and boyish sketches of mine at the Hellenic Institute, first essays in sepia and Indian ink, to animate the walls, and bring her back, when she sat there in the twilight musing alone, to sunny hours, when Sisty and the young mother threw daisies at each other;—and, covered with a great glass shade, and dusted each day with her own hand, the flower-pot Sisty had bought with the proceeds of the domino-box, on that memorable occasion on which he had learned "how bad deeds are repaired with good." There, in one corner, stood the little cottage piano, which I remembered all my life—old-fashioned, and with the jingling voice of approaching decrepitude, but still associated with such melodies as, after childhood, we hear never more! And in the modest hanging shelves, which looked so gay with ribbons, and tassels, and silken cords—my mother's own library, saying more to the heart than all the cold wise poets whose souls my father invoked in his grand Heraclea. The Bible over which, with eyes yet untaught to read, I had hung in vague awe and love, as it lay open on my mother's lap, while her sweet voice, then only serious, was made the oracle of its truths. And my first lesson-books were there, all hoarded. And bound in blue and gold, but elaborately papered up, *Cowper's Poems*—a gift from my father in the days of courtship—sacred treasure, which not even I had the privilege to touch; and which my mother took out only in the great crosses and trials of conjugal life, whenever some words less kind than usual had dropped unawares from her scholar's absent lips. Ah! all these poor household gods, all seemed to look on me with mild anger; and from all came a voice to my soul, "Cruel, dost thou forsake us!" And amongst them sat my mother, desolate as Rachel, and weeping silently.

"Mother! mother!" I cried, falling on her neck, "forgive me—it is past—I cannot leave you!"

CHAPTER III.

"No—no! it is for your good—Austin says so. Go—it is but the first shock."

Then to my mother I opened the sluices of that deep I had concealed from scholar and soldier. To her I poured all the wild, restless thoughts which wandered through the ruins of love destroyed—to her I confessed what to myself I had scarcely before avowed. And when the picture of that, the darker, side of my mind was shown, it was with a prouder face, and less broken voice, that I spoke of the manlier hopes and nobler aims that gleamed across the wrecks and the desert, and showed me my escape.

"Did you not once say, mother, that you had felt it like a remorse, that my father's genius passed so noiselessly away,—half accusing the happiness you gave him for the death of his ambition in the content of his mind? Did you not feel a new object in life when the ambition revived at last, and you thought you heard the applause of the world murmuring round your scholar's cell? Did you not share in the day-dreams your brother conjured up, and exclaim, 'If *my* brother could be the means of raising *him* in the world!' and when you thought we had found the way to fame and fortune, did you not sob out from your full heart, 'And it is *my* brother who will pay back to *his* son—all—all he gave up for me'?"

"I cannot bear this, Sisty?—cease, cease!"

"No; for do you not yet understand me? Will it not be better still, if *your son*—yours—restore to your Austin all that he lost, no matter how? If through your son, mother, you do indeed make the world hear of your husband's genius—restore the spring to his mind, the glory to his pursuits—if you rebuild even that vaunted ancestral name, which is glory to our poor sonless Roland—if your son can restore the decay of generations, and reconstruct from the dust the whole house into which you have entered, its meek presiding angel?—ah, mother! if this can be done, it will be your work; for unless you can share my ambition—unless you can dry those eyes, and smile in my face, and bid me go, with a cheerful voice—all my courage melts from my heart, and again I say, I cannot leave you!"

Then my mother folded her arms round me,

and we both wept, and could not speak—but we were both happy.

CHAPTER IV.

Now the worst was over, and my mother was the most heroic of us all. So I began to prepare myself in good earnest, and I followed Trevanion's instructions with a perseverance which I could never, at that young day, have thrown into the dead life of books. I was in a good school, amongst our Cumberland sheep-walks, to learn those simple elements of rural art which belong to the pastoral state. Mr. Sidney, in his admirable *Australian Hand-Book*, recommends young gentlemen who think of becoming settlers in the Bush to bivouac for three months on Salisbury Plain. That book was not then written, or I might have taken the advice; meanwhile I think, with due respect to such authority, that I went through a preparatory training quite as useful in seasoning the future emigrant. I associated readily with the kindly peasants and craftsmen, who became my teachers. With what pride I presented my father with a desk, and my mother with a work-box, fashioned by my own hands! I made Bolt a lock for his plate-chest, and (that last was *my* magnum opus, my great masterpiece) I repaired and absolutely set going an old turret-clock in the tower, that had stood at 2 P.M. since the memory of man. I loved to think, each time the hour sounded, that those who heard its deep chime would remember me. But the flocks were my main care. The sheep that I tended and helped to shear, and the lamb that I hooked out of the great marsh, and the three venerable ewes that I nursed through a mysterious sort of murrain, which puzzled all the neighborhood—are they not written in thy loving chronicles, O House of Caxton!

And now, since much of the success of my experiment must depend on the friendly terms I could establish with my intended partner, I wrote to Trevanion, begging him to get the young gentleman who was to join me, and whose capital I was to administer, to come and visit us. Trevanion complied, and there arrived a tall fellow, somewhat more than six feet high, answering to the name of Guy Bolding, in a cut-away sporting-coat, with a dog-whistle tied to the button-hole; drab shorts and gaiters, and a waistcoat with all manner of strange furtive pockets. Guy Bolding had lived a year and a half at Oxford as a "fast man;" so "fast" had he lived that there was scarcely a tradesman at Oxford into whose books he had not contrived to run.

His father was compelled to withdraw him from the university, at which he had already had the honor of being plucked for "the little go;" and the young gentleman, on being asked for what profession he was fit, had replied with conscious pride, "That he could tool a coach!" In despair, the sire, who owed his living to Trevanion, had asked the stateman's advice, and the advice had fixed me with a partner in expatriation.

My first feeling, in greeting the "fast" man, was certainly that of deep disappointment and strong repugnance. But I was determined not to be too fastidious; and, having a lucky knack of suiting myself pretty well to all tempers (without which a man had better not think of loadstones in the great Australasian Bight), I contrived before the first week was out to establish so many points of connection between us, that we became the best friends in the world. Indeed, it would have been my fault if we had not, for Guy Bolding, with all his faults, was one of those excellent creatures who are nobody's enemies but their own. His good-humor was inexhaustible. Not a hardship or privation came amiss to him. He had a phrase "Such fun!" that always rushed laughingly to his lips when another man would have cursed and groaned. If we lost our way in the great trackless moors, missed our dinner, and were half-famished, Guy rubbed hands that would have felled an ox, and chuckled out "Such fun!" If we stuck in a bog, if we were caught in a thunder-storm, if we were pitched head-over-heels by the wild colts we undertook to break in, Guy Bolding's sole elegy was "Such fun!" That grand shibboleth of philosophy only forsook him at the sight of an open book. I don't think that, at that time, he could have found "fun" even in Don Quixote. This hilarious temperament had no insensibility; a kinder heart never beat,—but, to be sure, it beat to a strange, restless, tarantula sort of measure, which kept it in a perpetual dance. It made him one of those offi-

ciously good fellows, who are never quiet themselves, and never let any one else be quiet if they can help it. But Guy's great fault in this prudent world, was his absolute incontinence of money. If you had turned a Euphrates of gold into his pockets at morning, it would have been as dry as the great Sahara by twelve at noon. What he did with the money was a mystery as much to himself as to every one else. His father said in a letter to me, that "he had seen him shying at sparrows with half-crowns!" That such a young man could come to no good in England, seemed perfectly clear. Still, it is recorded of many great men, who did not end their days in a workhouse, that they were equally non-retentive of money. Schiller, when he had nothing else to give away, gave the clothes from his back, and Goldsmith the blankets from his bed. Tender hands found it necessary to pick Beethoven's pockets at home before he walked out. Great heroes, who have made no scruple of robbing the whole world, have been just as lavish as poor poets and musicians. Alexander, in parcelling out his spoils, left himself "hope!" And as for Julius Cæsar, he was two millions in debt when he shied his last half-crown at the sparrows in Gaul. Encouraged by these illustrious examples, I had hopes of Guy Bolding; and the more as he was so aware of his own infirmity that he was perfectly contented with the arrangement which made me treasurer of his capital, and even besought me, on no account, let him beg ever so hard, to permit his own money to come in his own way. In fact, I contrived to gain a great ascendancy over his simple, generous, thoughtless nature; and by artful appeals to his affections—to all he owed to his father for many bootless sacrifices, and to the duty of providing a little dower for his infant sister, whose meditated portion had half gone to pay his college debts—I at last succeeded in fixing into his mind an object to save for.

Three other companions did I select for our Cleruchia. The first was the son of our old shepherd, who had lately married, but was not yet encumbered with children,—a good shepherd, and an intelligent, steady fellow. The second was a very different character; he had been the dread of the whole squirearchy. A more bold and dexterous poacher did not exist. Now my acquaintance with this lattet person, named Will Peterson, and more popularly "Will o' the Wisp," had commenced thus:—Bolt had managed to rear in a small copse about a mile from the house—and which was the only bit of ground in my uncle's domains that might by courtesy be called "a wood"—a young colony of pheasants, that he dignified by the title of a "preserve." This colony was audaciously despoiled and grievously depopulated, in spite of two watchers, who, with Bolt, guarded for seven nights successively the slumbers of the infant settlement. So insolent was the assault, that bang, bang went the felonnious gun—behind, before—within but a few yards of the sentinels—and the gunner was off, and the prey seized, before they could rush to the spot. The boldness and skill of the enemy soon proclaimed him, to the experienced watchers, to be Will o' the Wisp: and so great was their dread of this fellow's strength and courage, and so complete their despair of being a match for his swiftness and cunning, that after the seventh night the watchers refused to go out any longer; and poor Bolt himself was confined to his bed by an attack of what a doctor would have called rheumatism, and a moralist, rage. My indignation and sympathy were greatly excited by this mortifying failure, and my interest romantically aroused by the anecdotes I had heard of Will o' the Wisp; accordingly, armed with a thick bludgeon, I stole out at night, and took my way to the copse. The leaves were not off the trees, and how the poacher contrived to see his victims I know not; but five shots did he fire, and not in vain, without allowing me to catch a glimpse of him. I then retreated to the outskirt of the copse, and waited patiently by an angle, which commanded two sides of the wood. Just as the dawn began to peep, I saw my man emerge within twenty yards of me. I held my breath, suffered him to get a few steps from the wood, crept on so as to intercept his retreat, and then pounce—such a bound! My hand was on his shoulder—prr, prr,—no eel was ever more lubricate. He slid from me like a thing immaterial, and was off over the moors with a swiftness which might well have baffled any clodhopper—a race whose calves are generally absorbed in the soles of their hobnail shoes. But the Hellenic Institute, with its classical gymnasia, had trained its pupils in all bodily exercises; and though the Will o' the Wisp was swift for a clodhopper, he was no match at

running for any youth who has spent his boyhood in the discipline of cricket, prisoner's bar, and hunt-the-hare. I reached him at length, and brought him to bay.

"Stand back!" said he, panting, and taking aim with his gun: "it is loaded."

"Yes," said I; "but though you're a brave poacher, you dare not fire at your fellow-man. Give up the gun this instant."

My address took him by surprise; he did not fire. I struck up the barrel, and closed on him. We grappled pretty tightly, and in the wrestle the gun went off. The man loosened his hold. "Lord ha' mercy! I have not hurt you?" he said, falteringly.

"My good fellow—no," said I; "and now let us throw aside gun and bludgeon, and fight it out like Englishmen, or else let us sit down and talk over it like friends."

The Will o' the Wisp scratched its head and laughed.

"Well, you're a queer one!" quoth it. And the poacher dropped the gun and sat down.

We did talk it over, and I obtained Peterson's promise to respect the preserve henceforth; and we thereon grew so cordial that he walked home with me, and even presented me, shyly and apologetically, with the five pheasants he had shot. From that time I sought him out. He was a young fellow not four and twenty, who had taken to poaching from the wild sport of the thing, and from some confused notions that he had a licence from Nature to poach. I soon found out that he was meant for better things than to spend six months of the twelve in prison, and finish his life on the gallows after killing a game-keeper. That seemed to me his most probable destiny in the Old World, so I talked him into a burning desire for the New one: and a most valuable aid in the Bush he proved too.

My third selection was in a personage who could bring little physical strength to help us, but who had more mind (though with a wrong twist in it) than both the others put together.

A worthy couple in the village had a son, who being slight and puny, compared to the Cumberland breed, was shouldered out of the market of agricultural labor, and went off, yet a boy, to a manufacturing town. Now about the age of thirty, this mechanic, disabled for his work by a long illness, came home to recover; and in a short time we heard of nothing but the pestilential doctrines with which he was either shocking or infecting our primitive villagers. According to report, Corcyra itself never engendered a democrat more awful. The poor man was really very ill, and his parents very poor; but his unfortunate doctrines dried up all the streams of charity that usually flowed through our kindly hamlet. The clergyman (an excellent man, but of the old school) walked by the house as if it were tabooed. The apothecary said, "Miles Square ought to have wine;" but he did not send him any. The farmers held his name in execration, for he had incited all their laborers to strike for another shilling a-week. And but for the old Tower, Miles Square would soon have found his way to the only republic in which he could obtain that democratic fraternization for which he sighed—the grave being, I suspect, the sole commonwealth which attains that dead flat of social equality, that life in its every principle so heartily abhors.

My uncle went to see Miles Square, and came back the color of purple. Miles Square had preached him a long sermon on the unholiness of war. "Even in defence of your king and country!" had roared the Captain; and Miles Square had replied with a remark upon kings in general, that the Captain could not have repeated without expecting to see the old Tower fall about his ears; and with an observation about the country in particular, to the effect that "the country would be much better off if it *were* conquered!" On hearing the report of these loyal and patriotic replies, my father said, "Papæ!" and, roused out of his usual philosophical indifference went himself to visit Miles Square. My father returned as pale as my uncle had been purple. "And to think," said he, mournfully, "that in the town whence this man comes, there are, he tells me, ten thousand other of God's creatures who speed the work of civilization while execrating its laws!"

But neither father nor uncle made any opposition when, with a basket laden with wine and arrow-root, and a neat little Bible, bound in brown, my mother took her way to the excommunicated cottage. Her visit was as signal a failure as those that preceded it. Miles Square refused the basket; "he was not going to accept alms, and eat the bread of charity;"

and on my mother meekly suggesting that "if Mr. Miles Square would condescend to look into the Bible, he would see that even charity was no sin in giver or recipient," Mr. Miles Square had undertaken to prove "that, according to the Bible, he had as much a right to my mother's property as she had—that all things should be in common—and, when all things were in common, what became of charity? No; he could not eat my uncle's arrow-root, and drink his wine, while my uncle was improperly withholding from him and his fellow-creatures so many unprofitable acres: the land belonged to the people." It was now the turn of Pisistratus to go. He went once, and he went often. Miles Square and Pisistratus wrangled and argued—argued and wrangled—and ended by taking a fancy to each other; for this poor Miles Square was not half so bad as his doctrines. His errors arose from intense sympathy with the sufferings he had witnessed, amidst the misery which accompanies the reign of *millocratism*, and from the vague aspirations of a half-taught, impassioned, earnest nature. By degrees, I persuaded him to drink the wine and eat the arrow-root, *en attendant* that millennium which was to restore the land to the people. And then my mother came again and softened his heart, and, for the first time in his life, let into its cold crotchets the warm light of human gratitude. I lent him some books, among others a few volumes on Australia. A passage in one of the latter, in which it was said "that an intelligent mechanic usually made his way in the colony, even as a shepherd, better than a dull agricultural laborer," caught hold of his fancy, and seduced his aspirations into a healthful direction. Finally, as he recovered, he entreated me to let him accompany me. And as I may not have to return to Miles Square, I think it right here to state, that he did go with me to Australia, and did succeed, first as a shepherd, next as a superintendent, and finally, on saving money, as a landowner; and that in spite of his opinions of the unholiness of war, he was no sooner in possession of a comfortable log homestead, than he defended it with uncommon gallantry against an attack of the aborigines, whose right to the soil was, to say the least of it, as good as his claim to my uncle's acres; that he commemorated his subsequent acquisition of a fresh allotment, with the stock on it, by a little pamphlet, published at Sydney, on the *Sanctity of the Rights of Property;* and that, when I left the colony, having been much pestered by two refractory "helps" that he had added to his establishment, he had just distinguished himself by a very anti-levelling lecture upon the duties of servants to their employers. What would the Old World have done for this man!

CHAPTER V.

I HAD not been in haste to conclude my arrangements, for, independently of my wish to render myself acquainted with the small useful crafts that might be necessary to me in a life that makes the individual man a state in himself, I naturally desired to habituate my kindred to the idea of our separation, and to plan and provide for them all such substitutes or distractions, in compensation for my loss, as my fertile imagination could suggest. At first, for the sake of Blanche, Roland, and my mother, I talked the Captain into reluctant sanction of his sister-in-law's proposal, to unite their incomes and share alike, without considering which party brought the larger proportion into the firm. I represented to him that, unless he made that sacrifice of his pride, my mother would be wholly without those little notable uses and objects—those small household pleasures—so dear to woman; that all society in the neighborhood would be impossible, and that my mother's time would hang so heavily on her hands, that her only resource would be to muse on the absent one and fret. Nay, if he persisted in so false a pride, I told him, fairly, that I should urge my father to leave the Tower. These representations succeeded, and hospitality had commenced in the old hall, and a knot of gossips had centred round my mother — groups of laughing children had relaxed the still brow of Blanche — and the captain himself was a more cheerful and social man. My next point was to engage my father in the completion of the Great Book. "Ah, sir," said I, "give me an inducement to toil, a reward for my industry. Let me think, in each tempting pleasure, each costly vice—No, no; I will save

for the Great Book! and the memory of the father shall still keep the son from error. Ah, look you, sir! Mr. Trevanion offered me the loan of the £1500 necessary to commence with; but you generously and at once said—'No; you must not begin life under the load of debt.' And I knew you were right and yielded—yielded the more gratefully that I could not but forfeit something of the just pride of manhood in incurring such an obligation to the father of—Miss Trevanion. Therefore I have taken that sum from you—a sum that would almost have sufficed to establish your younger and worthier child in the world for ever. To that child let me repay it, otherwise I will not take it. Let me hold it as a trust for the Great Book; and promise me that the Great Book shall be ready when your wanderer returns, and accounts for the missing talent."

And my father pished a little, and rubbed off the dew that had gathered on his spectacles. But I would not leave him in peace till he had given me his word that the Great Book should go on *à pas du géant*—nay, till I had seen him sit down to it with good heart, and the wheel went round again in the quiet mechanism of that gentle life.

Finally, and as the culminating acme of my diplomacy, I effected the purchase of the neighboring apothecary's practice and goodwill for Squills, upon terms which he willingly subscribed to; for the poor man had pined at the loss of his favorite patients, though, Heaven knows, they did not add much to his income. And as for my father, there was no man who diverted him more than Squills, though he accused him of being a materialist, and set his whole spiritual pack of sages to worry and bark at him, from Plato and Zeno to Reid and Abraham Tucker.

Thus, although I have very loosely intimated the flight of time, more than a whole year elapsed from the date of our settlement at the Tower and that fixed for my departure.

In the meanwhile, despite the rarity amongst us of that phenomenon, a newspaper, we were not so utterly cut off from the sounds of the far-booming world beyond, but what the intelligence of a change in the administration, and the appointment of Mr. Trevanion to one of the great offices of state, reached our ears. I had kept up no correspondence with Trevanion subsequent to the letter that occasioned Guy Bolding's visit; I wrote now to congratulate him: his reply was short and hurried.

An intelligence that startled me more, and more deeply moved my heart, was conveyed to me, some three months or so before my departure, by Trevanion's steward. The ill health of Lord Castleton had deferred his marriage, intended originally to be celebrated as soon as he arrived of age. He left the university with the honors of "a double first class;" and his constitution appeared to rally from the effects of studies more severe to him than they might have been to a man of quicker and more brilliant capacities—when a feverish cold, caught at a county meeting, in which his first public appearance was so creditable as fully to justify the warmest hopes of his party, produced inflammation of the lungs, and ended fatally. The startling contrast forced on my mind—here, sudden death and cold clay—there, youth in its first flower, princely rank, boundless wealth, the sanguine expectation of an illustrious career, and the prospect of that happiness which smiled from the eyes of Fanny—that contrast impressed me with a strange awe: death seems so near to us when it strikes those whom life most flatters and caresses. Whence is that curious sympathy that we all have with the possessors of worldly greatness, when the hour-glass is shaken and the scythe descends? If the famous metting between Diogenes and Alexander had taken place not before, but after the achievements which gave to Alexander the name of Great, the cynic would not, perhaps, have envied the hero his pleasures nor his splendors—neither the charms of Statira nor the tiara of the Mede; but if, the day after, a cry had gone forth, "Alexander the Great is dead!" verily I believe that Diogenes would have coiled himself up in his tub, and felt that, with the shadow of the stately hero, something of glory and of warmth had gone from that sun, which it should darken never more. In the nature of man, the humblest or the hardest, there is a something that lives in all of the Beautiful or the Fortunate, which hope and desire have appropriated, even in the vanities of a childish dream.

CHAPTER VI.

"WHY are you here all alone, cousin? How cold and still it is amongst the graves!"

"Sit down beside me, Blanche; it is not colder in the churchyard than on the village green."

And Blanche sat down beside me, nestled close to me, and leant her head upon my shoulder. We were both long silent. It was an evening in the early spring, clear and serene—the roseate streaks were fading gradually from the dark gray of long, narrow, fantastic clouds. Tall, leafless poplars, that stood in orderly level line, on the lowland between the churchyard and the hill, with its crown of ruins, left their sharp summits distinct against the sky. But the shadows coiled dull and heavy round the evergreens that skirted the churchyard, so that their outline was vague and confused; and there was a depth in that lonely stillness, broken only when the thrush flew out from the lower bushes, and the thick laurel leaves stirred reluctantly, and again were rigid in repose. There is a certain melancholy in the evenings of early spring, which is among those influences of Nature the most universally recognized, the most difficult to explain. The silent stir of reviving life, which does not yet betray signs in the bud and blossom—only in a softer clearness in the air, a more lingering pause in the slowly lengthening day; a more delicate freshness and balm in the twilight atmosphere; a more lively, yet still unquiet note from the birds, settling down into their coverts;—the vague sense under all that hush which still outwardly wears the bleak sterility of winter—of the busy change, hourly, momently, at work—renewing the youth of the world, reclothing with vigorous bloom the skeletons of things—all these messages from the heart of Nature to the heart of Man may well affect and move us. But why with melancholy? No thought on our part connects and construes the low, gentle voices. It is not *thought* that replies and reasons: it is *feeling* that hears and dreams. Examine not, O child of man!—examine not that mysterious melancholy with the hard eyes of thy reason; thou canst not impale it on the spikes of thy thorny logic, nor describe its enchanted circle by problems conned from thy schools. Borderer thyself of two worlds—the Dead and the Living—give thine ear to the tones, bow thy soul to the shadows, that steal, in the Season of Change, from the dim Border Land.

BLANCHE (in a whisper).—What are you thinking of?—speak, pray!

PISISTRATUS.—I was not thinking, Blanche; or, if I were, the thought is gone at the mere effort to seize or detain it.

BLANCHE (after a pause).—I know what you mean. It is the same with me often—so often, when I am sitting by myself, quite still. It is just like the story Primmins was telling us the other evening, "how there was a woman in her village who saw things and people in a piece of crystal, not bigger than my hand:* they passed along as large as life, but they were only pictures in the crystal." Since I heard the story, when aunt asks me what I am thinking of, I long to say, "I'm not thinking! I am seeing pictures in the crystal!"

PISISTRATUS.—Tell my father *that;* it will please him. There is more philosophy in it than you are aware of, Blanche. There are wise men who have thought the whole world, its "pride, pomp, and circumstance," only a phantom image—a picture in the crystal.

BLANCHE.—And I shall see you—see us both, as we are sitting here—and that star which has just risen yonder—see it all in my crystal—when you are gone!—gone, cousin! (And Blanche's head drooped.)

There was something so quiet and deep in the tenderness of this poor motherless child, that it did not affect one superficially, like a child's loud momentary affection, in which we know that the first toy will replace us. I kissed my little cousin's pale face, and said, "And I too, Blanche, have my crystal; and when I consult it, I shall be very angry if I see you sad and fretting, or seated alone. For you must know, Blanche, that that is all selfishness. God made us, not to indulge only in crystal pictures,

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* In primitive villages, in the west of England, the belief that the absent may be seen in a piece of crystal is, or was not many years ago, by no means an uncommon superstition. I have seen more than one of these magic mirrors, which Spenser, by the way, has beautifully described. They are about the size and shape of a swan's egg. It is not every one, however, who can be a crystal-seer; like second-sight, it is a special gift. N.B.—Since the above note (appended to the first edition of this work) was written, crystals and crystal-seers have become very familiar to those who interest themselves in speculations upon the disputed phenomena ascribed to Mesmerical *Clairvoyance.*

weave idle fancies, pine alone, and mourn over what we cannot help—but to be alert and active—givers of happiness. Now, Blanche, see what a trust I am going to bequeath you. You are to supply my place to all whom I leave. You are to bring sunshine wherever you glide with that shy, soft step—whether to your father, when you see his brows knit and his arms crossed (that, indeed, you always do), or to mine, when the volume drops from his hand—when he walks to and fro the room, restless, and murmuring to himself—then you are to steal up to him, put your hand in his, lead him back to his books and whisper, 'What will Sisty say if his younger brother, the Great Book, is not grown up when he comes back?'—And my poor mother, Blanche!—ah, how can I counsel you there—how tell you where to find comfort for her? Only, Blanche, steal into her heart and be her daughter. And, to fulfil this threefold trust, you must not content yourself with seeing pictures in the crystal—do you understand me?"

"Oh yes," said Blanche, raising her eyes, while the tears rolled from them, and folding her arms resolutely on her breast.

"And so," said I, "as we two, sitting in this quiet burial-ground, take new heart for the duties and cares of life, so see, Blanche, how the stars come out, one by one, to smile upon us; for they, too, glorious orbs as they are, perform their appointed tasks. Things seem to approximate to God in proportion to their vitality and movement. Of all things, least inert and sullen should be the soul of man. How the grass grows up over the very graves—quickly it grows and greenly—but neither so quick nor so green, my Blanche, as hope and comfort from human sorrows."

PART FOURTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a beautiful and singular passage in Dante (which has not perhaps attracted the attention it deserves), wherein the stern Florentine defends Fortune from the popular accusations against her. According to him, she is an angelic power appointed by the Supreme Being to direct and order the course of human splendors; she obeys the will of God; she is blessed, and, hearing not those who blaspheme her, calm and aloft amongst the other angelic powers, revolves her spheral course, and rejoices in her beatitude.*

This is a conception very different from the popular notion which Aristophanes, in his true instinct of things popular, expresses by the sullen lips of his Plutus. That deity accounts for his blindness by saying, that "when a boy, he had indiscreetly promised to visit only the good," and Jupiter was so envious of the good that he blinded the poor money-god. Whereon Chremylus asks him, whether, "if he recovered his sight, he would frequent the company of the good?" "Certainly," quoth Plutus, "for I have not seen them ever so long." "Nor I either," rejoins Chremylus pithily, "for all I can see out of both eyes."

But that misanthropical answer of Chremylus is neither here nor there, and only diverts us from the real question, and that is, "Whether Fortune be a heavenly, Christian angel, or a blind, blundering, old heathen deity?" For my part, I hold with Dante—for which, if I were so pleased, or if, at this period of my memoirs, I had half a dozen pages to spare, I could give many good reasons. One thing, however, is quite clear—that, whether Fortune be more like Plutus or an angel, it is no use abusing her—one may as well throw stones at a star. And I think if one looked narrowly at her operations, one might perceive that she gives every man a chance, at least once in his life; if he take and make the best of it, she will renew her visits; if not, *itur ad astra!* And therewith I am reminded of an incident quaintly narrated by Mariana in his "History of Spain," how the army of the Spanish kings got out of a sad hobble among the mountains at the Pass of Losa, by the help of a shepherd, who showed them the way. "But," saith Mariana, parenthetically, "some do say the shepherd was an angel; for, after he had shown the way, he was never seen more." That is, the angelic nature of the guide was proved by being only once seen, and, after having got the army out of the hobble, leaving it to fight or run away, as it had most mind to. Now I look upon that shepherd or angel, as a very good type of my fortune at least. The apparition showed me my way in the rocks to the great "Battle of Life;" after that,—hold fast and strike hard!

Behold me in London with Uncle Roland. My poor parents naturally wished to accompany me, and take the last glimpse of the adventurer on board ship; but I, knowing that the parting would seem less dreadful to them by the hearthstone, and while they could say, "He is with Roland—he is not yet gone from the land"—insisted on their staying behind; and thus the farewell was spoken. But Roland, the old soldier, had so many practical instructions to give—could so help me in the choice of the outfit, and the preparations for

* Dante here evidently associates Fortune with the planetary influences of judicial astrology. It is doubtful whether Schiller ever read Dante; but in one of his most thoughtful poems he undertakes the same defence of Fortune, making the Fortunate a part of the Beautiful.

the voyage, that I could not refuse his companionship to the last. Guy Bolding, who had gone to take leave of his father, was to join me in town, as well as my humbler Cumberland colleagues.

As my uncle and I were both of one mind upon the question of economy, we took up our quarter at a lodging-house in the City; and there it was that I first made acquaintance with a part of London, of which few of my politer readers even pretend to be cognizant. I do not mean any sneer at the City itself, my dear alderman; that jest is worn out. I am not alluding to streets, courts, and lanes; what I mean may be seen at the west end—not so well as at the east, but still seen very fairly; I mean—THE HOUSE-TOPS!

CHAPTER II.

BEING A CHAPTER ON HOUSE-TOPS.

THE HOUSE-TOPS! what a soberizing effect that prospect produces on the mind. But a great many requisites go towards the selection of the right point of survey. It is not enough to secure a lodging in the attic; you must not be fobbed off with a front attic that faces the street. First, your attic must be unequivocally a back attic; secondly, the house in which it is located must be slightly elevated above its neighbors; thirdly, the window must not lie slant on the roof, as is common with attics—in which case you only catch a peep of that leaden canopy which infatuated Londoners call the sky—but must be a window perpendicular, and not half blocked up by the parapets of that fosse called the gutter; and, lastly, the sight must be so humored that you cannot catch a glimpse of the pavements: if you once see the world beneath, the whole charm of that world above is destroyed. Taking it for granted that you have secured these requisites, open your window, lean your chin on both hands, the elbows propped commodiously on the sill, and contemplate the extraordinary scene which spreads before you. You find it difficult to believe life can be so tranquil on high, while it is so noisy and turbulent below. What astonishing stillness! Elliot Warburton (seductive enchanter!) recommends you to sail down the Nile if you want to lull the vexed spirit. It is easier and cheaper to hire an attic in Holborn! You don't have the crocodiles, but you have animals no less hallowed in Egypt—the cats! And how harmoniously the tranquil creatures blend with the prospect—how noiselessly they glide along at the distance, pause, peer about, and disappear. It is only from the attic that you can appreciate the picturesque which belongs to our demesticated tigerkin! The goat should be seen on the Alps, and the cat on the house-top.

By degrees the curious eye takes the scenery in detail: and first, what fantastic variety in the heights and shapes of the chimney-pots! Some all level in a row, uniform and respectable, but quite uninteresting; others, again, rising out of all proportion, and imperatively tasking the reason to conjecture why they are so aspiring. Reason answers that it is but a homely expedient to give freer vent to the smoke; wherewith Imagination steps in, and represents to you all the fretting, and fuming, and worry, and care, which the owners of that chimney, now the tallest of all, endured, before, by building it higher, they got rid of the vapors. You see the distress of the cook, when the sooty invader rushed down, "like a wolf on the fold," full spring on the Sunday joint. You hear the exclamations of the mistress (perhaps a bride—house newly furnished) when, with white apron and cap, she ventured into the drawing room, and was straightway saluted by a joyous dance of those monads, called vulgarly *smuts*. You feel manly indignation at the brute of a bridegroom, who rushes out from the door, with the smuts dancing after him, and swears, "Smoked out again! By the Archsmoker himself! I'll go and dine at the club." All this might well have been, till the chimney-pot was raised a few feet nearer heaven; and now perhaps that long-suffering family owns the happiest home in the Row. Such contrivances to get rid of the smoke! It is not every one who merely heightens his chimney; others clap on the hollow tormentor all sorts of odd headgear and cowls. Here, patent contrivances act the purpose of weathercocks, swaying to and fro with the wind; there, others stand as fixed, as if, by a "*sic jubeo*," they had settled the business. But of all those houses that, in the street, one passes by, unsuspicious of what's the matter within, there is not

one in a hundred but what there has been the devil to do, to cure the chimneys of smoking! At that reflection, Philosophy dismisses the subject; and decides that, whether one lives in a hut or a palace, the first thing to do is to look to the hearth—and get rid of the vapors.

New beauties demand us. What endless undulations in the various declivities and ascents; here a slant, there a zig-zag! With what majestic disdain yon roof rises up to the left! Doubtless, a palace of Genii or Gin (which last is the proper Arabic word for those builders of halls out of nothing, employed by Aladdin). Seeing only the roof of that palace boldly breaking the skyline—how serene your contemplations! Perhaps a star twinkles over it, and you muse on soft eyes far away; while below, at the threshold—No, phantoms! we see you not from our attic. Note, yonder, that precipitous fall—how ragged and jagged the roof-scene descends in a gorge. He who would travel on foot through the pass of that defile, of which we see but the picturesque summits, stops his nose, averts his eyes, guards his pockets, and hurries along through the squalor of the grim London lazzaroni. But, seen *above*, what a noble break in the skyline! It would be sacrilege to exchange that fine gorge for a dead flat of dull roof-tops. Look here—how delightful!—that desolate house with no roof at all—gutted and skinned by the last London fire! You can see the poor green-and-white paper still clinging to the walls, and the chasm that once was a cupboard, and the shadows gathering black on the aperture that once was a hearth! Seen below, how quickly you would cross over the way! That great crack forbodes an avalanche; you hold your breath, not to bring it down on your head. But, seen *above*, what a compassionate inquisitive charm in the skeleton ruin! How your fancy runs riot—repeopling the chambers, hearing the last cheerful good night of that destined Pompeii—creeping on tiptoe with the mother, when she gives her farewell look to the baby. Now all is midnight and silence; then the red, crawling serpent comes out. Lo! his breath; hark! his hiss. Now, spire after spire he winds and he coils; now he soars up erect—crest superb, and forked tongue—the beautiful horror! Then the start from the sleep, and the doubtful awaking, and the run here and there, and the mother's rush to the cradle; the cry from the window, and the knock at the door, and the spring of those on high towards the stair that leads to safety below, and the smoke rushing up like the surge of a hell! And they run back stifled and blinded, and the floor heaves beneath them like a bark on the sea. Hark! the grating wheels thundering low; near and nearer comes the engine. Fix the ladders!—there! there! at the window, where the mother stands with the babe! Splash and hiss comes the water; pales, then flares out, the fire: foe defies foe; element, element. How sublime is the war! But the ladder, the ladder!—there, at the window! All else are saved: the clerk and his books; the lawyer with that tin box of title-deeds; the landlord, with his policy of insurance; the miser, with his bank-notes and gold: all are saved—all, but the babe and the mother. What a crowd in the streets! how the light crimsons over the gazers, hundreds on hundreds! All those faces seem as one face, with fear. Not a man mounts the ladder. Yes, there—gallant fellow! God inspires—God shall speed thee! How plainly I see him! his eyes are closed, his teeth set. The serpent leaps up, the forked tongue darts upon him, and the reek of the breath wraps him round. The crowd has ebbed back like a sea, and the smoke rushes over them all. Ha! what dim forms are those on the ladder? Near and nearer—crash come the roof-tiles. Alas, and alas!—no! a cry of joy—a "Thank Heaven!" and the women force their way through the men to come round the child and the mother. All is gone save that skeleton ruin. But the ruin is seen from *above*. O Art! study life from the roof-tops!

CHAPTER III.

I WAS again foiled in seeing Trevanion. It was the Easter recess, and he was at the house of one of his brother ministers, somewhere in the north of England. But Lady Ellinor was in London, and I was ushered into her presence. Nothing could be more cordial than her manner, though she was evidently much depressed in spirits, and looked wan and careworn.

After the kindest inquiries relative to my parents and the Captain, she entered with much sympathy into my schemes and plans,

which she said Trevanion had confided to her. The sterling kindness that belonged to my old patron (despite his affected anger at my not accepting his proffered loan) had not only saved me and my fellow-adventurer all trouble as to allotment orders, but procured advice as to choice of site and soil, from the best practical experience, which we found afterwards exceedingly useful. And as Lady Ellinor gave me the little packet of papers, with Trevanion's shrewd notes on the margin, she said with a half sigh, "Albert bids me say that he wishes he were as sanguine of his success in the cabinet as of yours in the Bush." She then turned to her husband's rise and prospects, and her face began to change. Her eye sparkled, the color came to her cheeks—"But you are one of the few who know him," she said, interrupting herself suddenly; "you know how he sacrifices all things—joy, leisure, health—to his country. There is not one selfish thought in his nature. And yet such envy—such obstacles still! and" (her eyes dropped on her dress, and I perceived that she was in mourning, though the mourning was not deep), "and," she added, "it has pleased Heaven to withdraw from his side one who would have been worthy his alliance."

I felt for the proud woman, though her emotion seemed more that of pride than sorrow. And perhaps Lord Castleton's highest merit in her eyes had been that of ministering to her husband's power and her own ambition. I bowed my head in silence and thought of Fanny. Did she, too, pine for the lost rank, or rather mourn the lost lover?

After a time, I said hesitatingly, "I scarcely presume to condole with you, Lady Ellinor! yet believe me, few things ever shocked me like the death you allude to. I trust Miss Trevanion's health has not much suffered. Shall I not see her before I leave England?"

Lady Ellinor fixed her keen bright eyes searchingly on my countenance, and perhaps the gaze satisfied her, for she held out her hand to me with a frankness almost tender, and said—"Had I had a son, the dearest wish of my heart had been to see you wedded to my daughter."

I started up—the blood rushed to my cheeks, and then left me pale as death. I looked reproachfully at Lady Ellinor, and the word "cruel!" faltered on my lips.

"Yes," continued Lady Ellinor, mournfully, "that was my real thought, my impulse of regret, when I first saw you. But, as it is, do not think me too hard and worldly, if I quote the lofty old French proverb, *Noblesse oblige.* Listen to me, my young friend—we may never meet again, and I would not have your father's son think unkindly of me, with all my faults. From my first childhood I was ambitious—not as women usually are, of mere wealth and rank—but ambitious as noble men are, of power and fame. A woman can only indulge such ambition by investing it in another. It was not wealth, it was not rank, that attracted me to Albert Trevanion: it was the nature that dispenses with the wealth, and commands the rank. Nay," continued Lady Ellinor, in a voice that slightly trembled, "I may have seen in my youth, before I knew Trevanion, one (she paused a moment, and went on hurriedly)—one who wanted but ambition to have realized my ideal. Perhaps, even when I married—and it was said for love—I loved less with my whole heart than with my whole mind. I may say this now, for *now* every beat of this pulse is wholly and only true to him with whom I have schemed, and toiled, and aspired; with whom I have grown as one; with whom I have shared the struggle, and now partake the triumph, realizing the visions of my youth."

Again the light broke from the dark eyes of this grand daughter of the world, who was so superb a type of that moral contradiction—*an ambitious woman.*

"I cannot tell you," resumed Lady Ellinor, softening, "how pleased I was when you came to live with us. Your father has perhaps spoken to you of me, and of our first acquaintance!"

Lady Ellinor paused abruptly, and surveyed me as she paused. I was silent.

"Perhaps, too, he has blamed me?" she resumed, with a heightened color.

"He never blamed you, Lady Ellinor!"

"He had a right to do so—though I doubt if he would have blamed me on the true ground. Yet no; he never could have done me the wrong that your uncle did, when, long years ago, Mr. De Caxton in a letter—the very bitterness of which disarmed all anger—accused me of having trifled with Austin—nay, with himself! And *he*, at least, had *no* right to reproach me," continued Lady Ellinor warmly,

and with a curve of her haughty lip; "for if I felt interest in his wild thirst for some romantic glory, it was but in the hope that, what made the one brother so restless might at least wake the other to the ambition that would have become his intellect, and aroused his energies. But these are old tales of follies and delusions now no more: only this will I say, that I have ever felt, in thinking of your father, and even of your sterner uncle, as if my conscience reminded me of a debt which I longed to discharge—if not to them, to their children. So, when we knew you, believe me, that your interests, your career, instantly became to me an object. But mistaking you—when I saw your ardent industry bent on serious objects, and accompanied by a mind so fresh and buoyant; and, absorbed as I was in schemes or projects far beyond a woman's ordinary province of hearth and home—I never dreamed, while you were our guest—never dreamed of danger to you or Fanny. I wound you—pardon me; but I must vindicate myself. I repeat that, if we had a son to inherit our name, to bear the burthen which the world lays upon those who are born to influence the world's destinies, there is no one to whom Trevanion and myself would sooner have entrusted the happiness of a daughter. But my daughter is the sole representative of the mother's line, of the father's name: it is not her happiness alone that I have to consult, it is her duty—duty to her birthright, to the career of the noblest of England's patriots—duty, I may say, without exaggeration, to the country for the sake of which that career is run!"

"Say no more, Lady Ellinor; say no more. I understand you. I have no hope—I never had hope—it was a madness—it is over. It is but as a friend that I ask again, if I may see Miss Trevanion in your presence, before—before I go alone into this long exile, to leave, perhaps, my dust in a stranger's soil! Ay, look in my face—you cannot fear my resolution, my honor, my truth. But once, Lady Ellinor—but once more. Do I ask in vain?"

Lady Ellinor was evidently much moved. I bent down almost in the attitude of kneeling; and, brushing away her tears with one hand, she laid the other on my head tenderly, and said in a very low voice—

"I entreat you not to ask me; I entreat you not to see my daughter. You have shown that you are not selfish—conquer yourself still. What if such an interview, however guarded you might be, were but to agitate, unnerve my child, unsettle her peace, prey upon—"

"Oh, do not speak thus—she did not share my feelings!"

"Could her mother own it if she did? Come, come, remember how young you both are. When you return all these dreams will be forgotten; then we can meet as before—then I will be your second mother, and again your career shall be my care; for do not think that we shall leave you so long in this exile as you seem to forbode. No, no; it is but an absence—an excursion—not a search after fortune. Your fortune—leave that to us when you return!"

"And I am to see her no more!" I murmured, as I rose, and went silently towards the window to conceal my face. The great struggles in life are limited to moments. In the drooping of the head upon the bosom—in the pressure of the hand upon the brow—we may scarcely consume a second in our threescore years and ten; but what revolutions of our whole being may pass within us, while that single sand drops noiseless down to the bottom of the hour-glass.

I came back with firm step to Lady Ellinor, and said calmly, "My reason tells me that you are right, and I submit. Forgive me! and do not think me ungrateful and over-proud, if I add, that you must leave me still the object in life that consoles and encourages me through all."

"What object is that?" asked Lady Ellinor, hesitatingly.

"Independence for myself, and ease to those for whom life is still sweet. This is my twofold object; and the means to effect it must be my own heart and my own hands. And now, convey all my thanks to your noble husband, and accept my warm prayers for yourself and *her*—whom I will not name. Farewell, Lady Ellinor."

"No, do not leave me so hastily; I have many things to discuss with you—at least to ask of you. Tell me how your father bears his reverse?—tell me, at least, if there be aught he will suffer us to do for him? There are many appointments in Trevanion's range of influence that would suit even the wilful indolence of a man of letters. Come, be frank with me!"

I could not resist so much kindness; so I sat down, and, as collectedly as I could, replied to Lady Ellinor's questions, and sought to convince her that my father only felt his losses so far as they affected me, and that nothing in Trevanion's power was likely to tempt him from his retreat, or calculated to compensate for a change in his habits. Turning at last from my parents, Lady Ellinor inquired for Roland, and, on learning that he was with me in town, expressed a strong desire to see him. I told her I would communicate her wish, and she then said thoughtfully—

"He has a son, I think, and I have heard that there is some unhappy dissension between them."

"Who could have told you that?" I asked in surprise, knowing how closely Roland had kept the secret of his family afflictions.

"Oh, I heard so from some one who knew Captain Roland—I forget when and where I heard it—but is it not the fact?"

"My uncle Roland has no son."

"How!"

"His son is dead."

"How such a loss must grieve him."

I did not speak.

"But is he sure that his son is dead? What joy if he were mistaken—if the son yet lived!"

"Nay, my uncle has a brave heart, and he is resigned;—but, pardon me, have you heard anything of that son?"

"I!—what should I hear? I would fain learn, however, from your uncle himself, what he might like to tell me of his sorrows—or if, indeed, there be any chance that——"

"That—what?"

"That—that his son still survives."

"I think not," said I; "and I doubt whether you will learn much from my uncle. Still there is something in your words that belies their apparent meaning, and makes me suspect that you know more than you will say."

"Diplomatist!" said Lady Ellinor, half smiling; but then, her face settling into a seriousnsss almost severe, she added—"It is terrible to think that a father should hate his son!"

"Hate!—Roland *hate* his son! What calumny is this?"

"He does not do so, then! Assure me of that; I shall be so glad to know that I have been misinformed."

"I can tell you this, and no more—for no more do I know—that if ever the soul of a father were wrapt up in a son—fear, hope, gladness, sorrow, all reflected back on a father's heart from the shadows on a son's life—Roland was that father while the son lived still."

"I cannot disbelieve you!" exclaimed Lady Ellinor, though in a tone of surprise. "Well, do let me see your uncle."

"I will do my best to induce him to visit you, and learn all that you evidently conceal from me."

Lady Ellinor evasively replied to this insinuation, and shortly afterwards I left that house in which I had known the happiness that brings the folly, and the grief that bequeaths the wisdom.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAD always felt a warm and almost filial affection for Lady Ellinor, independently of her relationship to Fanny, and of the gratitude with which her kindness inspired me: for there is an affection very peculiar in its nature, and very high in its degree, which results from the blending of two sentiments not often allied,—viz., pity and admiration. It was impossible not to admire the rare gifts and great qualities of Lady Ellinor, and not to feel pity for the cares, anxieties, and sorrows which tormented one who, with all the sensitiveness of woman, went forth into the rough world of man.

My father's confession had somewhat impaired my esteem for Lady Ellinor, and had left on my mind the uneasy impression that she *had* trifled with his deep, and Roland's impetuous heart. The conversation that had just passed allowed me to judge her with more justice—allowed me to see that she had really shared the affection she had inspired in the student, but that ambition had been stronger than love—an ambition, it might be, irregular, and not strictly feminine, but still of no vulgar nor sordid kind. I gathered, too, from her hints and allusions, her true excuse for Roland's misconception of her apparant interest in himself: she had but seen, in the wild energies of the elder brother, some agency by which to arouse the serener faculties of the younger. She had but sought, in the strange comet that flashed before her, to fix a lever that might

move the star. Nor could I withhold my reverence from the woman who, not being married precisely from love, had no sooner linked her nature to one worthy of it, than her whole life became as fondly devoted to her husband's as if he had been the object of her first romance and her earliest affections. If even her child was so secondary to her husband—if the fate of that child was but regarded by her as one to be rendered subservient to the grand destinies of Trevanion—still it was impossible to recognize the error of that conjugal devotion without admiring the wife, though one might condemn the mother. Turning from these meditations, I felt a lover's thrill of selfish joy, amidst all the mournful sorrow comprised in the thought that I should see Fanny no more. Was it true, as Lady Ellinor implied, though delicately, that Fanny still cherished a remembrance of me—which a brief interview, a last farewell, might reawaken too dangerously for her peace? Well, that was a thought that it became me not to indulge.

What could Lady Ellinor have heard of Roland and his son? Was it possible that the lost lived still? Asking myself these questions, I arrived at our lodgings, and saw the Captain himself before me, busied with the inspection of sundry specimens of the rude necessaries an Australian adventurer requires. There stood the old soldier, by the window, examining narrowly into the temper of hand-saw and tenor-saw, broad axe and drawing-knife; and as I came up to him, he looked at me from under his black brows, with gruff compassion, and said, peevishly—

"Fine weapons these for the son of a gentleman!—one bit of steel in the shape of a sword were worth them all."

"Any weapon that conquers fate is noble in the hands of a brave man, uncle."

"The boy has an answer for everything," quoth the Captain, smiling, as he took out his purse and paid the shopman.

When we were alone, I said to him—"Uncle, you must go and see Lady Ellinor; she desires me to tell you so."

"Pshaw!"

"You will not?"

"No!"

"Uncle, I think that she has something to say to you with regard to—to—pardon me!—to my cousin."

"To Blanche?"

"No, no,—the cousin I never saw."

Roland turned pale, and, sinking down on a chair, faltered out—"To him—to my son?"

"Yes; but I do not think it is news that will afflict you. Uncle, are you sure that my cousin is dead?"

"What!—how dare you!—who doubts it? Dead—dead to me for ever! Boy, would you have him live to dishonor these gray hairs?"

"Sir, sir, forgive me—uncle, forgive me: but, pray, go to see Lady Ellinor; for whatever she has to say, I repeat that I am sure it will be nothing to wound you."

"Nothing to wound me—yet relate to *him!*"

It is impossible to convey to the reader the despair that was in those words.

"Perhaps," said I, after a long pause, and in a low voice—for I was awe-stricken—"perhaps—if he be dead—he may have repented of all offence to you before he died."

"Repented—ha, ha!"

"Or, if he be not dead——"

"Hush, boy—hush!"

"While there is life, there is hope of repentance."

"Look you, nephew," said the Captain, rising and folding his arms resolutely on his breast—"look you, I desired that that name might never be breathed. I have not cursed my son yet; could he come to life—the curse might fall! You do not know what torture your words have given me, just when I had opened my heart to another son, and found that son in you. With respect to the lost I have now but one prayer, and you know it—the heartbroken prayer—that his name never more may come to my ears!"

As he closed these words, to which I ventured no reply, the Captain took long, disordered strides across the room; and suddenly, as if the space imprisoned, or the air stifled him, he seized his hat, and hastened into the streets. Recovering my surprise and dismay, I ran after him; but he commanded me to leave him to his own thoughts, in a voice so stern, yet so sad, that I had no choice but to obey. I knew, by my own experience, how necessary is solitude in the moments when grief is strongest and thought most troubled.

CHAPTER V.

Hours elapsed, and the Captain had not returned home. I began to feel uneasy, and went forth in search of him, though I knew not whither to direct my steps. I thought it, however, at least probable that he had not been able to resist visiting Lady Ellinor, so I went first to St. James's Square. My suspicions were correct; the Captain had been there two hours before. Lady Ellinor herself had gone out shortly after the captain left. While the porter was giving me this information, a carriage stopped at the door and a footman, stepping up, gave the porter a note and a small parcel, seemingly of books, saying simply, "From the Marquis of Castleton." At the sound of that name I turned hastily, and recognized Sir Sedley Beaudesert seated in the carriage, and looking out of the window with a dejected, moody expression of countenance, very different from his ordinary aspect, except when the rare sight of a gray hair or a twinge of the toothache reminded him that he was no longer twenty-five. Indeed, the change was so great that I exclaimed, dubiously—"Is that Sir Sedley Beaudesert?" The footman looked at me, and touching his hat said, with a condescending smile,—"Yes, sir—now the Marquis of Castleton."

Then, for the first time since the young lord's death, I remembered Sir Sedley's expressions of gratitude to Lady Castleton, and the waters of Ems, for having saved him from "that horrible marquisate." Meanwhile, my old friend had perceived me, exclaiming,—

"What! Mr. Caxton! I am delighted to see you. Open the door, Thomas. Pray come in, come in."

I obeyed; and the new Lord Castleton made room for me by his side.

"Are you in a hurry?" said he: "if so, shall I take you anywhere?—if not, give me half an hour of your time, while I drive to the City."

As I knew not now in what direction, more than another, to prosecute my search for the Captain, and as I thought I might as well call at our lodgings to inquire if he had not returned, I answered that I should be very happy to accompany his lordship; "though the City," said I, smiling, "sounds to me strange upon the lips of Sir Sedley—I beg pardon, I should say of Lord——"

"Don't say any such thing; let me once more hear the grateful sound of Sedley Beaudesert. Shut the door, Thomas; to Gracechurch Street—Messrs. Fudge and Fidget."

The carriage drove on.

"A sad affliction has befallen me," said the marquis, "and none sympathize with me!"

"Yet all, even unacquainted with the late lord, must have felt shocked at the death of one so young, and so full of promise."

"So fitted in every way to bear the burthen of the great Castleton name and property—and yet you see it killed him! Ah! if he had been but a simple gentleman, or if he had had a less conscientious desire to do his duties, he would have lived to a good old age. I know what it is already. Oh, if you saw the piles of letters on my table! I positively dread the post. Such colossal improvement on the property which the poor boy had begun, for me to finish. What do you think takes me to Fudge and Fidget's? Sir, they are the agents for an infernal coal-mine which my cousin had reopened in Durham, to plague my life out with another thirty thousand pounds a year! How am I to spend the money?—how am I to spend it? There's a cold-blooded head steward, who says that charity is the greatest crime a man in high station can commit; it demoralizes the poor. Then, because some half-a-dozen farmers sent me a round-robin, to the effect that their rents were too high, and I wrote them word that the rents should be lowered, there was such a hullabaloo—you would have thought heaven and earth were coming together. 'If a man in the position of the Marquis of Castleton set the example of letting land below its value, how could the poorer squires in the country exist?—or, if they did exist, what injustice to expose them to the charge that they were grasping landlords, vampires, and bloodsuckers! Clearly if Lord Castleton lowered his rents (they were too low already), he struck a mortal blow at the property of his neighbors, if they followed his example: or at their characters if they did not.' No man can tell how hard it is to do good, unless fortune gives him a hundred thousand pounds a year, and says,—'Now, do good with it!' Sedley Beaudesert might follow his whims, and all that would be said against him was 'good-natured simple fellow!' But if Lord Castleton follow his whims,

you would think he was a second Catiline—unsettling the peace, and undermining the prosperity, of the entire nation!" Here the wretched man paused, and sighed heavily; then, as his thoughts wandered into a new channel of woe, he resumed,—"Ah! if you could but see the forlorn great house I am expected to inhabit, cooped up between dead walls, instead of my pretty rooms, with the windows full on the Park; and the balls I am expected to give, and the parliamentary interest I am to keep up: and the villanous proposal made to me to become a lord steward or lord chamberlain, because it suits my rank to be a sort of a servant. Oh, Pisistratus! you lucky dog—not twenty-one, and with, I dare say, not two hundred pounds a-year in the world!"

Thus bemoaning and bewailing his sad fortunes, the poor marquis ran on, till at last he exclaimed, in a tone of yet deeper despair,—

"And everybody says I must marry, too!—that the Castleton line must not be extinct! The Beaudeserts are a good old family eno'—as old, for what I know, as the Castletons; but the British empire would suffer no loss if they sunk into the tomb of the Capulets. But that the Castleton peerage should expire, is a thought of crime and woe, at which all the mothers of England rise in a phalanx! And so, instead of visiting the sins of the fathers on the sons, it is the father that is to be sacrificed for the benefit of the third and fourth generation!"

Despite my causes for seriousness, I could not help laughing; my companion turned on me a look of reproach.

"At least," said I, composing my countenance, "Lord Castleton has one comfort in his afflictions—if he must marry, he may choose as he pleases."

"That is precisely what Sedley Beaudesert could, and Lord Castleton cannot do," said the marquis, gravely. "The rank of Sir Sedley Beaudesert was a quiet and comfortable rank—he might marry a curate's daughter, or a duke's—and please his eye or grieve his heart as the caprice took him. But Lord Castleton must marry, not for a wife, but for a marchioness,—marry some one who *will wear his rank* for him,—take the trouble of splendor off his hands, and allow him to retire into a corner, and dream that he is Sedley Beaudesert once more! Yes, it must be so—the crowning sacrifice must be completed at the altar. But a truce to my complaints. Trevanion informs me you are going to Australia,—can that be true?"

"Perfectly true."

"They say there is a sad want of ladies there."

"So much the better,—I shall be all the more steady."

"Well, there's something in that. Have you seen Lady Ellinor?"

"Yes—this morning."

"Poor woman!—a great blow to her—we have tried to console each other. Fanny, you know, is staying at Oxton, in Surrey, with Lady Castleton—the poor lady is so fond of her—and no one has comforted her like Fanny."

"I was not aware that Miss Trevanion was out of town."

"Only for a few days, and then she and Lady Ellinor join Trevanion in the north—you know he is with Lord N——, settling measures on which—but alas! they consult me now on those matters—force their secrets on me. I have, Heaven knows how many votes! Poor me! Upon my word, if Lady Ellinor was a widow, I should certainly make up to her; very clever woman, nothing bores her." (The marquis yawned—Sir Sedley Beaudesert never yawned.) "Trevanion has provided for his Scotch secretary, and is about to get a place in the Foreign Office for that young fellow Gower, whom, between you and me, I don't like. But he has bewitched Trevanion!"

"What sort of a person is this Mr. Gower?—I remember you said that he was clever, and good-looking."

"He is both, but it is not the cleverness of youth; he is as hard and sarcastic as if he had been cheated fifty times, and jilted a hundred! Neither are his good looks that letter of recommendation which a handsome face is said to be. He has an expression of countenance very much like that of Lord Hertford's pet bloodhound, when a stranger comes into the room. Very sleek, handsome dog, the bloodhound is certainly—well-mannered, and I dare say exceedingly tame; but still you have but to look at the corner of the eye, to know that it is only the habit of the drawing-room that suppresses the creature's constitutional tendency to seize you by the throat, instead of giving you a paw. Still this Mr. Gower has a very striking head—something about it Moor-

ish or Spanish, like a picture by Murillo: I half suspect that he is less a Gower than a gypsy!"

"What!"—I cried, as I listened with rapt and breathless attention to this description. "He is then very dark, with high narrow forehead, features slightly aquiline, but very delicate, and teeth so dazzling that the whole face seems to sparkle when he smiles—though it is only the lip that smiles, not the eye."

"Exactly as you say; you have seen him, then?"

"Why, I am not sure, since you say his name is Gower."

"*He* says his name is Gower," returned Lord Castleton, drily, as he inhaled the Beaudesert mixture.

"And where is he now?—with Mr. Trevanion?"

"Yes, I believe so. Ah! here we are—Fudge and Fidget! But, perhaps," added Lord Castleton, with a gleam of hope in his blue eye—"perhaps they are not at home!"

Alas! that was an illusive "imagining," as the poets of the nineteenth century unaffectedly express themselves. Messrs. Fudge and Fidget were never out to such clients as the Marquis of Castleton: with a deep sigh, and an altered expression of face, the Victim of Fortune slowly descended the steps of the carriage.

"I can't ask you to wait for me," said he: "Heaven only knows how long I shall be kept! Take the carriage where you will, and send it back to me."

"A thousand thanks, my dear lord, I would rather walk—but you will let me call on you before I leave town."

"Let you!—I insist on it. I am still at the old quarters—under pretence," said the marquis, with a sly twinkle of the eyelid, "that Castleton House wants painting!"

"At twelve to-morrow, then?"

"Twelve to-morrow. Alas! that's just the hour at which Mr. Screw, the agent for the London property (two squares, seven streets, and a lane!) is to call."

"Perhaps two o'clock will suit you better?"

"Two!—just the hour at which Mr. Plausible, one of the Castleton members, insists upon telling me why his conscience will not let him vote with Trevanion!"

"Three o'clock?"

"Three!—just the hour at which I am to see the Secretary of the Treasury, who has promised to relieve Mr. Plausible's conscience! But come and dine with me—you will meet the executors to the will!"

"Nay, Sir Sedley—that is, my dear lord—I will take my chance, and look in after dinner."

"Do so; my guests are not lively! What a firm step the rogue has! Only twenty, I think—twenty! and not an acre of property to plague him!" So saying, the marquis dolorously shook his head, and vanished through the noiseless mahogany doors, behind which Messrs. Fudge and Fidget awaited the unhappy man,—with the accounts of the Great Castleton coal-mine.

CHAPTER VI.

On my way towards our lodgings, I resolved to look in at a humble tavern, in the coffee-room of which the captain and myself habitually dined. It was now about the usual hour in which we took that meal, and he might be there waiting for me. I had just gained the steps of this tavern, when a stage-coach came rattling along the pavement, and drew up at an inn of more pretensions than that which we favored, situated within a few doors of the latter. As the coach stopped, my eye was caught by the Trevanion livery, which was very peculiar. Thinking I must be deceived, I drew near to the wearer of the livery, who had just descended from the roof, and while he paid the coachman, gave his orders to a waiter who emerged from the inn—"Half-and-half, cold without!" The tone of the voice struck me as familiar, and, the man now looking up, I beheld the features of Mr. Peacock. Yes, unquestionably it was he. The whiskers were shaved—there were traces of powder in the hair or the wig—the livery of the Trevanions (ay, the very livery—crest-button and all) upon that portly figure, which I had last seen in the more august robes of a beadle. But Mr. Peacock it was—Peacock travestied, but Peacock still. Before I had recovered my amaze, a woman got out of a cabriolet, that seemed to have been in waiting for the arrival of the coach, and, hurrying up to Mr. Peacock, said in the loud impatient tone common

to the fairest of the fair sex, when in haste—"How late you are!—I was just going. I must get back to Oxton to-night."

Oxton—Miss Trevanion was staying at Oxton! I was now close behind the pair—I listened with my heart in my ear.

"So you shall, my dear—so you shall; just come in, will you."

"No, no; I have only ten minutes to catch the coach. Have you any letter for me from Mr. Gower? How can I be sure, if I don't see it under his own hand, that——"

"Hush!" said Peacock, sinking his voice so low that I could only catch the words, "no names—letter, pooh, I'll tell you." He then drew her apart, and whispered to her for some moments. I watched the woman's face, which was bent towards her companion's, and it seemed to show quick intelligence. She nodded her head more than once, as if in impatient assent to what was said; and, after a shaking of hands, hurried off to the cab; then, as if a thought struck her, she ran back and said—

"But in case my lady should not go—if there's any change of plan."

"There'll be no change, you may be sure—positively to-morrow—not too early; you understand?"

"Yes, yes; good by"—and the woman, who was dressed with a quiet neatness, that seemed to stamp her profession as that of an abigail (black cloak, with long cape—of that peculiar silk which seems spun on purpose for ladies'-maids—bonnet to match, with red and black ribbons), hastened once more away, and in another moment the cab drove off furiously.

What could all this mean? By this time the waiter brought Mr. Peacock the half-and-half. He despatched it hastily, and then strode on towards a neighboring stand of cabriolets. I followed him; and just as, after beckoning one of the vehicles from the stand, he had ensconced himself therein, I sprang up the steps and placed myself by his side. "Now, Mr. Peacock," said I, "you will tell me at once how you come to wear that livery, or I shall order the cabman to drive to Lady Ellinor Trevanion's, and ask her that question myself."

"And who the devil!—Ah, you're the young gentleman that came to me behind the scenes—I remember."

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabman.

"To—to London Bridge," said Mr. Peacock.

The man mounted the box, and drove on.

"Well, Mr. Peacock, I wait your answer. I guess by your face that you are about to tell me a lie; I advise you to speak the truth."

"I don't know what business you have to question me," said Mr. Pecacock, sullenly; and raising his glance from his own clenched fists, he suffered it to wander over my form with so vindictive a significance, that I interrupted the survey by saying, "'Will you encounter the house?' as the Swan interrogatively puts it—shall I order the cabman to drive to St. James's Square?"

"Oh, you know my weak point, sir; any man who can quote Will—sweet Will—has me on the hip," rejoined Mr. Peacock, smoothing his countenance, and spreading his palms on his knees. "But if a man does fall in the world, and, after keeping servants of his own, is obliged to be himself a servant,

> ——'I will not shame
> To tell you what I am.'"

"The Swan says, 'To tell you what I *was*,' Mr. Peacock. But enough of this trifling; who placed you with Mr. Trevanion?"

Mr. Peacock looked down for a moment, and then fixing his eyes on me, said—"Well, I'll tell you: you asked me, when we met last, about a young gentleman—Mr.—Mr. Vivian."

PISISTRATUS.—Proceed.

PEACOCK.—I know you don't want to harm him. Besides, "He hath a prosperous art," and one day or other,—mark my words, or rather my friend Will's—

> "He will bestride this narrow world
> Like a Colossus."

Upon my life he will—like a Colossus,

> "And we petty men"—

PISISTRATUS (savagely).—Go on with your story.

PEACOCK (snappishly).—I am going on with it! You put me out; where was I—oh—ah—yes. I had just been sold up—not a penny in my pocket; and if you could have seen my coat—yet that was better than the small-clothes! Well, it was in Oxford street—no, it was in the Strand, near the Lowther—

> "The sun was in the heavens; and the proud day
> Attended, with the pleasures of the world."

PISISTRATUS (lowering the glass).—To St. James's Square?

PEACOCK.—No, no; to London Bridge.

"How use doth breed a habit in a man!"

I will go on—honor bright. So I met Mr. Vivian, and as he had known me in better days, and has a good heart of his own, he says—

"Horatio,—or I do forget myself."

Pisistratus puts his hand on the check-string.

PEACOCK (correcting himself). I mean—Why, Johnson, my good fellow.

PISISTRATUS.—Johnson!—oh, that's your name—not Peacock.

PEACOCK.—Johnson and Peacock both (with dignity). When you know the world as I do, sir, you will find that it is ill travelling this "naughty world" without a change of names in your portmanteau.

"Johnson," says he, "my good fellow," and he pulled out his purse. "Sir," said I, "if 'exempt from public haunt,' I could get something to do when this dross is gone. In London there are sermons in stones, certainly, but not 'good in everything,'—an observation I should take the liberty of making to the Swan, if he were not now, alas! 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

PISISTRATUS.—Take care!

PEACOCK (hurriedly). — Then says Mr. Vivian, "If you don't mind wearing a livery, till I can provide for you more suitably, my old friend, there's a vacancy in the establishment of Mr. Trevanion." Sir, I accepted the proposal, and that's why I wear this livery.

PISISTRATUS.—And pray, what business had you with that young woman, whom I take to be Miss Trevanion's maid? and why should she come from Oxton to see you?

I had expected that these questions would confound Mr. Peacock; but if there really were anything in them to cause embarrassment, the *ci-devant* actor was too practised in his profession to exhibit it. He merely smiled, and, smoothing jauntily a very tumbled shirt-front, he said, "Oh, sir, fie!

'Of this matter,
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made.'

If you must know my love affairs, that young woman is, as the vulgar say, my sweetheart."

"Your sweetheart!" I exclaimed, greatly relieved, and acknowledging at once the probability of the statement. "Yet," I added, suspiciously—"yet, if so, why should she expect Mr. Gower to write to her?"

"You're quick of hearing, sir; but though

——'All adoration, duty, and observance:
All humblenesss, and patience, and impatience,'

the young woman won't marry a livery servant—proud creature!—very proud!—and Mr. Gower, you see, knowing how it was, felt for me, and told her, if I may take such liberty with the Swan, that she should

——'Never lie by Johnson's side
With an unquiet soul,'

for that he would get me a place in the Stamps! The silly girl said she would have it in black and white—as if Mr. Gower would write to her!

"And now, sir," continued Mr. Peacock, with a simpler gravity, "you are at liberty, of course, to say what you please to my lady, but I hope you'll not try to take the bread out of my mouth because I wear a livery, and am fool enough to be in love with a waiting-woman—I, sir, who could have married ladies who have played the first parts in life—on the metropolitan stage."

I had nothing to say to these representations—they seemed plausible; and though at first I had suspected that the man had only resorted to the buffoonery of his quotations in order to gain time for invention, or to divert my notice from any flaw in his narrative, yet at the close, as the narrative seemed probable, so I was willing to believe the buffoonery was merely characteristic. I contented myself, therefore, with asking—

"Where do you come from now?"

"From Mr. Trevanion, in the country, with letters to Lady Ellinor."

"Oh! and so the young woman knew you were coming to town?"

"Yes, sir; Mr. Trevanion told me, some days ago, the day I should have to start."

"And what do you and the young woman propose doing to-morrow, if there is no change of plan?"

Here I certainly thought there was a slight, scarce perceptible, alteration in Mr. Peacock's countenance, but he answered readily, "To-

morrow, a little assignation, if we can both get out—

> 'Woo me, now I am in a holiday humor,
> And like enough to consent.'

Swan again, sir."

"Humph!—so then Mr. Gower and Mr. Vivian are the same person?"

Peacock hesitated. "That's not *my* secret, sir; 'I am combined by a sacred vow.' You are too much the gentleman to peep through the blanket of the dark, and to ask me, who wear the whips and stripes—I mean the plush small-clothes and shoulderknots—the secrets of another gent, to whom 'my services are bound.'"

How a man past thirty foils a man scarcely twenty!—what superiority the mere fact of living-on gives to the dullest dog! I bit my lip and was silent.

"And," pursued Mr. Peacock, "if you knew how the Mr. Vivian you inquired after loves you! When I told him incidentally, how a young gentleman had come behind the scenes to inquire after him, he made me describe you, and then said, quite mournfully, 'If ever I am what I hope to become, how happy I shall be to shake that kind hand once more,'—very words, sir!—honor bright!

> 'I think there's ne'er a man in Christendom
> Can lesser hide his hate or love than he.'

And if Mr. Vivian has some reason to keep himself concealed still—if his fortune or ruin depend on your not divulging his secret for a while—I can't think you are the man he need fear. 'Pon my life,

> 'I wish I was as sure of a good dinner,'

as the Swan touchingly exclaims. I dare swear that was a wish often on the Swan's lips in the privacy of his domestic life!"

My heart was softened, not by the pathos of the much profaned and desecrated Swan, but by Mr. Peacock's unadorned repetition of Vivian's words; I turned my face from the sharp eyes of my companion—the cab now stopped at the foot of London Bridge.

I had no more to ask, yet still there was some uneasy curiosity in my mind, which I could hardly define to myself,—was it not jealousy? Vivian so handsome and so daring—*he* at least might see the great heiress; Lady Ellinor perhaps thought of no danger there. But—I—I was a lover still, and—nay, such thoughts were folly indeed!

"My man," said I to the ex-comedian, "I neither wish to harm Mr. Vivian (if I am so to call him), nor you who imitate him in the variety of your names. But I tell you fairly, that I do not like your being in Mr. Trevanion's employment, and I advise you to get out of it as soon as possible. I say nothing more as yet, for I shall take time to consider well what you have told me."

With that I hastened away, and Mr. Peacock continued his solitary journey over London Bridge.

CHAPTER VII.

AMIDST all that lacerated my heart, or tormented my thoughts, that eventful day, I felt at least one joyous emotion, when, on entering our little drawing-room, I found my uncle seated there.

The Captain had placed before him on the table a large Bible, borrowed from the landlady. He never travelled, to be sure, without his own Bible, but the print of that was small, and the Captain's eyes began to fail him at night. So this was a Bible with large type; and a candle was placed on either side of it; and the Captain leant his elbows on the table, and both his hands were tightly clasped upon his forehead—tightly, as if to shut out the tempter, and *force* his whole soul upon the page.

He sat the image of iron courage; in every line of that rigid form there was resolution. "I will *not* listen to my heart; I *will* read the Book, and learn to suffer as becomes a Christian man."

There was such a pathos in the stern sufferer's attitude, that it spoke those words as plainly as if his lips had said them.

Old soldier! thou hast done a soldier's part in many a bloody field; but if I could make visible to the world thy brave soldier's soul, I would paint thee as I saw thee then!—Out on this tyro's hand!

At the movement I made, the Captain looked up, and the strife he had gone through was written upon his face.

"It has done me good," said he, simply, and he closed the book.

I drew my chair near to him, and hung my arm over his shoulder.

"No cheering news, then?" asked I, in a whisper.

Roland shook his head, and gently laid his finger on his lips.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was impossible for me to intrude upon Roland's thoughts, whatever their nature, with a detail of those circumstances which had roused in me a keen and anxious interest in things apart from his sorrow.

Yet as "restless I roll'd around my weary bed," and revolved the renewal of Vivian's connection with a man of character so equivocal as Peacock, the establishment of an able and unscrupulous tool of his own in the service of Trevanion, the care with which he had concealed from me his change of name, and his intimacy at the very house to which I had frankly offered to present him; the familiarity which his creature had contrived to effect with Miss Trevanion's maid, the words that had passed between them—plausibly accounted for, it is true, yet still suspicious—and, above all, my painful recollections of Vivian's reckless ambition and unprincipled sentiments—nay, the effect that a few random words upon Fanny's fortune, and the luck of winning an heiress, had sufficed to produce upon his heated fancy and audacious temper: when all these thoughts came upon me, strong and vivid, in the darkness of night, I longed for some confidant, more experienced in the world than myself, to advise me as to the course I ought to pursue. Should I warn Lady Ellinor? But of what?—the character of a servant, or the designs of the fictitious Gower?

Against the first I could say, if nothing very positive, still enough to make it prudent to dismiss him. But of Gower or Vivian, what could I say without—not indeed betraying his confidence, for that he had never given me—but without belying the professions of friendship that I myself had lavishly made to him? Perhaps, after all, he might have disclosed whatever were his real secrets to Trevanion; and, if not, I might indeed ruin his prospects by revealing the aliases he assumed. But wherefore reveal, and wherefore warn? Because of suspicions that I could not myself analyze—suspicions founded on circumstances most of which had already been seemingly explained away. Still, when morning came, I was irresolute what to do; and after watching Roland's countenance, and seeing on his brow so great a weight of care, that I had no option but to postpone the confidence I pined to place in his strong understanding and unerring sense of honor, I wandered out, hoping that in the fresh air I might recollect my thoughts, and solve the problem that perplexed me. I had enough to do in sundry small orders for my voyage, and commissions for Bolding, to occupy me some hours. And, this business done, I found myself moving westward: mechanically, as it were, I had come to a kind of half-and-half resolution to call upon Lady Ellinor, and question her, carelessly and incidentally, both about Gower and the new servant admitted to the household.

Thus I found myself in Regent Street, when a carriage, borne by post-horses, whirled rapidly over the pavement—scattering to the right and left all humbler equipages—and hurried, as if on an errand of life and death, up the broad thoroughfare leading into Portland Place. But, rapidly as the wheels dashed by, I had seen distinctly the face of Fanny Trevanion in the carriage, and that face wore a strange expression, which seemed to me to speak of anxiety and grief; and, by her side—was not that the woman I had seen with Peacock? I did not see the face of the woman, but I thought I recognized the cloak, the bonnet, and peculiar turn of the head. If I could be mistaken there, I was not mistaken at least as to the servant on the seat behind. Looking back at a butcher's boy, who had just escaped being run over, and was revenging himself by all the imprecations the Diræ of London slang could suggest, the face of Mr. Peacock was exposed in full to my gaze.

My first impulse, on recovering my surprise, was to spring after the carriage; in the haste of that impulse, I cried "Stop!" But the carriage was out of sight in a moment, and my word was lost in air. Full of presentiments of some evil—I knew not what—I then altered my course, and stopped not, till I found myself, panting and out of breath, in St. James's Square—at the door of Trevanion's house—in

the hall. The porter had a newspaper in his hand as he admitted me.

"Where is Lady Ellinor?—I must see her instantly."

"No worse news of master, I hope, sir?"

"Worse news of what?—of whom?—of Mr. Trevanion?"

"Did you not know he was suddenly taken ill, sir; that a servant came express to say so last night? Lady Ellinor went off at ten o'clock to join him."

"At ten o'clock last night?"

"Yes, sir; the servant's account alarmed her ladyship so much."

"The new servant, who had been recommended by Mr. Gower?"

"Yes, sir—Henry," answered the porter, staring at me. "Please, sir, here is an account of master's attack in the paper. I suppose Henry took it to the office before he came here, which was very wrong in him; but I am afraid he's a very foolish fellow."

"Never mind that. Miss Trevanion—I saw her just now—*she* did not go with her mother: where was she going, then?"

"Why, sir—but pray step into the parlor."

"No, no—speak!"

"Why, sir, before Lady Ellinor set out, she was afraid that there *might* be something in the papers to alarm Miss Fanny, and so she sent Henry down to Lady Castleton's to beg her ladyship to make as light of it as she could; but it seems that Henry blabbed the worst to Mrs. Mole."

"Who is Mrs. Mole?"

"Miss Trevanion's maid, sir—a new maid; and Mrs. Mole blabbed to my young lady, and so she took fright, and insisted on coming to town. And Lady Castleton, who is ill herself in bed, could not keep her, I suppose,—especially as Henry said, though he ought to have known better, 'that she would be in time to arrive before my lady set off.' Poor Miss Trevanion was so disappointed when she found her mamma gone. And then she would order fresh horses, and would go on, though Mrs. Bates (the housekeeper, you know, sir) was very angry with Mrs. Mole, who encouraged Miss; and"—

"Good heavens! Why did not Mrs. Bates go with her?"

"Why, sir, you know how old Mrs. Bates is, and my young lady is always so kind that she would not hear of it, and she is going to travel night and day; and Mrs. Mole said she had gone all over the world with her last lady, and that"—

"I see it all. Where is Mr. Gower?"

"Mr. Gower, sir!"

"Yes! Can't you answer?"

"Why, with Mr. Trevanion, I believe, sir."

"In the north—what is the address?"

"Lord N——, C—— Hall, near W——"

I heard no more.

The conviction of some villanous snare struck me as with the swiftness and force of lightning. Why, if Trevanion were really ill, had the false servant concealed it from me? Why suffered me to waste his time, instead of hastening to Lady Ellinor? How, if Mr. Trevanion's *sudden* illness had brought the man to London—how had he known so long beforehand (as he himself told me, and his appointment with the waiting-woman proved) the day he should arrive? Why now, if there were no design of which Miss Trevanion was the object—why so frustrate the provident foresight of her mother, and take advantage of the natural yearning of affection, the quick impulse of youth, to hurry off a girl whose very station forbade her to take such a journey without suitable protection—against what must be the wish, and what clearly were the instructions, of Lady Ellinor? Alone, worse than alone! Fanny Trevanion was then in the hands of two servants, who were the instruments and confidants of an adventurer like Vivian; and that conference between those servants—those broken references to the morrow, coupled with the name Vivian had assumed: needed the unerring instincts of love more cause for terror?—terror the darker, because the exact shape it should assume was obscure and indistinct.

I sprang from the house.

I hastened into the Haymarket, summoned a cabriolet, drove home as fast as I could (for I had no money about me for the journey I meditated); sent the servant of the lodging to engage a chaise-and-four, rushed into the room, where Roland fortunately still was, and exclaimed—"Uncle, come with me!—take money, plenty of money!—some villany I know, though I can't explain it, has been practised on the Trevanions. We may defeat it yet. I will tell you all by the way—come, come!"

"Certainly. But villany!—and to people of

such a station—pooh !—collect yourself. Who is the villain ? "

" Oh, the man I had loved as a friend—the man whom I myself helped to make known to Trevanion—Vivian—Vivian ! "

" Vivian !—ah, the youth I have heard you speak of. But how ?—villany to whom—to Trevanion ? "

" You torture me with your questions. Listen—this Vivian (I know him)—he has introduced into the house, as a servant, an agent capable of any trick and fraud; that servant has aided him to win over her maid—Fanny's —Miss Trevanion's. Miss Trevanion is an heiress, Vivian an adventurer. My head swims round, I cannot explain now. Ha ! I will write a line to Lord Castleton—tell him my fears and suspicions—he will follow us, I know, or do what is best."

I drew ink and paper towards me, and wrote hastily. My uncle came round and looked over my shoulder.

Suddenly he exclaimed, seizing my arm, " Gower, Gower ! What name is this ? You said ' Vivian.' "

" Vivian or Gower—the same person."

My uncle hurried out of the room. It was natural that he should leave me to make our joint and brief preparations for departure.

I finished my letter, sealed it, and when, five minutes afterwards, the chaise came to the door, I gave it to the ostler who accompanied the horses, with injunctions to deliver it forthwith to Lord Castleton himself.

My uncle now descended, and stepped from the threshold with a firm stride. " Comfort yourself," he said, as he entered the chaise, into which I had already thrown myself. " We may be mistaken yet."

" Mistaken ! You do not know this young man. He has every quality that could entangle a girl like Fanny, and not, I fear, one sentiment of honor, that would stand in the way of his ambition. I judge him now as by a revelation—too late—oh Heavens, if it be too late ! "

A groan broke from Roland's lips. I heard in it a proof of his sympathy with my emotion, and grasped his hand; it was as cold as the hand of the dead.

PART FIFTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

THERE would have been nothing in what had chanced to justify the suspicions that tortured me, but for my impressions as to the character of Vivian.

Reader, hast thou not, in the easy, careless sociability of youth, formed acquaintance with some one, in whose more engaging or brilliant qualities thou hast—not lost that dislike to defects or vices which is natural to an age when, even while we err, we adore what is good and glow with enthusiasm for the ennobling sentiment and the virtuous deed—no, happily, not lost dislike to what is bad, nor thy quick sense of it—but conceived a keen interest in the struggle between the bad that revolted, and the good that attracted thee, in thy companion? Then, perhaps, thou hast lost sight of him for a time—suddenly thou hearest that he has done something out of the way of ordinary good or common-place evil; and, in either—the good or the evil—thy mind runs rapidly back over its old reminiscences, and of either thou sayest, "How natural!—only so-and-so could have done this thing!"

Thus I felt respecting Vivian. The most remarkable qualities in his character were his keen power of calculation, and his unhesitating audacity—qualities that lead to fame or to infamy, according to the cultivation of the moral sense and the direction of the passions. Had I recognized those qualities in some agency apparently of good—and it seemed yet doubtful if Vivian were the agent—I should have cried, "It is he! and the better angel has triumphed!" With the same (alas! with a yet more impulsive) quickness, when the agency was of evil, and the agent equally dubious, I felt that the qualities revealed the man, and that the demon had prevailed.

Mile after mile, stage after stage, were passed on the dreary, interminable, high north road. I narrated to my companion, more intelligibly than I had yet done, my causes for apprehension. The Captain at first listened eagerly, then checked me on the sudden. "There may be nothing in all this!" he cried. "Sir, we must be men here—have our heads cool, our reason clear; stop!" And, leaning back in the chaise, Roland refused farther conversation, and, as the night advanced, seemed to sleep. I took pity on his fatigue, and devoured my heart in silence. At each stage we heard of the party of which we were in pursuit. At the first stage or two we were less than an hour behind; gradually, as we advanced, we lost ground, despite the most lavish liberality to the post-boys. I supposed, at length, that the mere circumstance of changing, at each relay, the chaise as well as the horses, was the cause of our comparative slowness; and, on saying this to Roland, as we were changing horses, somewhere about midnight, he at once called up the master of the inn, and gave him his own price for permission to retain the chaise till the journey's end. This was so unlike Roland's ordinary thrift, whether dealing with my money or his own—so unjustified by the fortune of either—that I could not help muttering something in apology.

"Can you guess why I was a miser?" said Roland, calmly.

"A miser!—anything but that! Only prudent—military men often are so."

"I was a miser," repeated the Captain, with emphasis. "I began the habit first when my son was but a child. I thought him high-spirited, and with a taste for extravagance. 'Well,' said I to myself, 'I will save for him; boys will be boys.' Then, afterwards, when he was no more a child, (at least he began to have the

vices of a man !) I said to myself, 'Patience, he may reform still; if not, I will save money, that I may have power over his self-interest, since I have none over his heart. I will bribe him into honor !' And then—and then—God saw that I was very proud, and I was punished. Tell them to drive faster—faster—why, this is a snail's pace ! "

All that night, all the next day, till towards the evening, we pursued our journey, without pause, or other food than a crust of bread and a glass of wine. But we now picked up the ground we had lost, and gained upon the carriage. The night had closed in when we arrived at the stage at which the route to Lord N——'s branched from the direct north road. And here, making our usual inquiry, my worst suspicions were confirmed. The carriage we pursued had changed horses an hour before, but had not taken the way to Lord N——'s;—continuing the direct road into Scotland. The people of the inn had not seen the lady in the carriage, for it was already dark, but the man-servant (whose livery they described) had ordered the horses.

The last hope that, in spite of appearances, no treachery had been designed, here vanished. The Captain, at first, seemed more dismayed than myself, but he recovered more quickly. "We will continue the journey on horseback," he said; and hurried to the stables. All objections vanished at the sight of his gold. In five minutes we were in the saddle, with a postilion, also mounted, to accompany us. We did the next stage in little more than two-thirds of the time which we should have occupied in our former mode of travel—indeed, I found it hard to keep pace with Roland. We remounted; we were only twenty-five minutes behind the carriage. We felt confident that we should overtake it before it could reach the next town—the moon was up—we could see far before us—we rode at full speed. Milestone after milestone glided by; the carriage was not visible. We arrived at the post-town, or rather village; it contained but one posting-house. We were long in knocking up the ostlers—no carriage had arrived just before us; no carriage had passed the place since noon.

What mystery was this ?

"Back, back, boy ! " said Roland, with a soldier's quick wit, and spurring his jaded horse from the yard. "They will have taken a cross-road or by-lane. We shall track them by the hoofs of the horses, or the print of the wheels."

Our postilion grumbled, and pointed to the panting sides of our horses. For answer, Roland opened his hand—full of gold. Away we went back through the dull sleeping village, back into the broad moonlit thoroughfare. We came to a cross-road to the right, but the track we pursued still led us straight on. We had measured back nearly half the way to the post-town at which we had last changed, when lo ! there emerged from a by-lane two postilions and their horses !

At that sight our companion, shouting loud, pushed on before us and hailed his fellows. A few words gave us the information we sought. A wheel had come off the carriage just by the turn of the road, and the young lady and her servants had taken refuge in a small inn not many yards down the lane. The man-servant had dismissed the postboys after they had baited their horses, saying they were to come again in the morning, and bring a blacksmith to repair the wheel.

"How came the wheel off ? " asked Roland, sternly.

"Why, sir, the linch-pin was all rotted away, I suppose, and came out."

"Did the servant get off the dickey after you set out, and before the accident happened ? "

"Why, yes. He said the wheels were catching fire, that they had not the patent axles, and he had forgot to have them oiled."

"And he looked at the wheels, and shortly afterwards the linch-pin came out ? Eh ? "

"Anan, sir ! " said the postboy, staring; "why, and indeed so it was ! "

"Come on, Pisistratus, we are in time; but pray God—pray God—that "—the Captain dashed his spur into the horse's sides, and the rest of his words was lost to me.

A few yards back from the causeway, a broad patch of green before it, stood the inn—a sullen, old-fashioned building of cold gray stone, looking livid in the moon-light, with black firs at one side, throwing over half of it a dismal shadow. So solitary ! not a house, not a hut near it. If they who kept the inn were such that villany might reckon on their connivance, and innocence despair of their aid

—there was no neighborhood to alarm—no refuge at hand. The spot was well chosen.

The doors of the inn were closed; there was a light in the room below; but the outside shutters were drawn over the windows on the first floor. My uncle paused a moment, and said to the postilion—

"Do you know the way back to the premises?"

"No, sir: I doesn't often come by this way, and they be new folks that have taken the house—and I hear it don't prosper over much."

"Knock at the door; we will stand a little aside while you do so. If any one ask what you want—merely say you would speak to the servant—that you have found a purse;—here, hold up mine."

Roland and I had dismounted, and my uncle drew me close to the wall by the door. Observing that my impatience ill submitted to what seemed to me idle preliminaries.

"Hist!" whispered he; "if there be anything to conceal within, they will not answer the door till some one has reconnoitred; were they to see us, they would refuse to open. But seeing only the postboy, whom they will suppose at first to be one of those who brought the carriage, they will have no suspicion. Be ready to rush in the moment the door is unbarred."

My uncle's veteran experience did not deceive him. There was a long silence before any reply was made to the postboy's summons; the light passed to and fro rapidly across the window, as if persons were moving within. Roland made sign to the postboy to knock again; he did so twice—thrice—and at last, from an attic window in the roof, a head obtruded, and a voice cried, "Who are you?—what do you want?"

"I'm the postboy at the Red Lion; I want to see the servant with the brown carriage: I have found this purse!"

"Oh, that's all—wait a bit."

The head disappeared; we crept along under the projecting eaves of the house; we heard the bar lifted from the door; the door itself cautiously opened; one spring and I stood within, and set my back to the door to admit Roland.

"Ho, help!—thieves!—help!" cried a loud voice, and I felt a hand gripe at my throat. I struck at random in the dark, and with effect, for my blow was followed by a groan and a curse.

Roland, meanwhile, had detected a ray through the chinks of a door in the hall, and, guided by it, found his way into the room at the window of which we had seen the light pass and go, while without. As he threw the door open, I bounded after him, and saw, in a kind of parlor, two females—the one a stranger, no doubt the hostess, the other the treacherous abigail. Their faces evinced their terror.

"Woman," I said, seizing the last, "where is Miss Trevanion?" Instead of replying, the woman set up a loud shriek. Another light now gleamed from the staircase which immediately faced the door; and I heard a voice, that I recognized as Peacock's, cry out, "Who's there?—What's the matter?"

I made a rush at the stairs. A burly form (that of the landlord, who had recovered from my blow) obstructed my way for a moment, to measure its length on the floor at the next. I was at the top of the stairs; Peacock recognized me, recoiled, and extinguished the light. Oaths, cries, and shrieks now resounded through the dark. Amidst them all, I suddenly heard a voice exclaim, "Here, here!—help!" It was the voice of Fanny. I made my way to the right, whence the voice came, and received a violent blow. Fortunately, it fell on the arm which I extended, as men do who feel their way through the dark. It was not the right arm, and I seized and closed on my assailant. Roland now came up, a candle in his hand, and at that sight my antagonist, who was no other than Peacock, slipped from me, and made a rush at the stairs. But the captain caught him with his grasp of iron. Fearing nothing for Roland in a contest with any single foe, and all my thoughts bent on the rescue of her whose voice again broke on my ear, I had already (before the light of the candle which Roland held went out in the struggle between himself and Peacock) caught sight of a door at the end of the passage, and thrown myself against it: it was locked, but it shook and groaned to my pressure.

"Hold back, whoever you are:" cried a voice from the room within, far different from that wail of distress which had guided my steps. "Hold back, at the peril of your life!"

The voice, the threat, redoubled my strength; the door flew from its fastenings. I stood in

the room. I saw Fanny at my feet, clasping my hands; then, raising herself, she hung on my shoulder and murmured "Saved!" Opposite to me, his face deformed by passion, his eyes literally blazing with savage fire, his nostrils distended, his lips apart, stood the man I have called Francis Vivian.

"Fanny—Miss Trevanion—what outrage—what villany is this? You have not met this men at your free choice,—oh speak!" Vivian sprang forward.

"Question no one but me. Unhand that lady,—she is my betrothed—shall be my wife."

"No, no, no,—don't believe him," cried Fanny; "I have been betrayed by my own servants—brought here, I know not how! I heard my father was ill; I was on my way to him: that man met me here, and dared to—"

"Miss Trevanion—yes, I dared to say I loved you."

"Protect me from him!—you will protect me from him!"

"No, madam!" said a voice behind me, in a deep tone, "it is I who claim the right to protect you from that man; it is I who now draw around you the arm of one sacred, even to him; it is I who, from this spot, launch upon his head—a father's curse. Violator of the hearth! Baffled ravisher!—go thy way to the doom which thou hast chosen for thyself. God will be merciful to me yet, and give me a grave before thy course find its close in the hulks—or at the gallows!"

A sickness came over me—a terror froze my veins—I reeled back, and leant for support against the wall. Roland had passed his arm round Fanny, and she, frail and trembling, clung to his broad breast, looking fearfully up to his face. And never in that face, ploughed by deep emotions, and dark with unutterable sorrows, had I seen an expression so grand in its wrath, so sublime in its despair. Following the direction of his eye, stern and fixed as the look of one who prophesies a destiny and denounces a doom, I shivered as I gazed upon the son. His whole frame seemed collapsed and shrinking, as if already withered by the curse; a ghastly whiteness overspread the cheek, usually glowing with the dark bloom of oriental youth; the knees knocked together; and, at last, with a faint exclamation of pain, like the cry of one who receives a deathblow, he bowed his face over his clasped hands, and so remained—still, but cowering.

Instinctively I advanced, and placed myself between the father and the son, murmuring, "Spare him; see, his own heart crushes him down." Then stealing towards the son, I whispered, "Go, go; the crime was not committed, the curse can be recalled." But my words touched a wrong chord in that dark and rebellious nature. The young man withdrew his hands hastily from his face and reared his front in passionate defiance.

Waving me aside, he cried, "Away! I acknowledge no authority over my actions and my fate; I allow no mediator between this lady and myself. Sir," he continued, gazing gloomily on his father—"sir, you forget our compact. Our ties were severed, your power over me annulled; I resigned the name you bear; to you I was, and am still, as the dead. I deny your right to step between me and the object dearer to me than life."

"Oh!" (and here he stretched forth his hands towards Fanny)—"Oh, Miss Trevanion, do not refuse me one prayer, however you condemn me. Let me see you alone but for one moment; let me but prove to you that, guilty as I may have been, it was not from the base motives you will hear imputed to me—that it was not the heiress I sought to decoy, it was the woman I sought to win; oh, hear me,—"

"No, no," murmured Fanny, clinging closer to Roland, "do not leave me. If, as it seems, he is your son, I forgive him; but let him go—I shudder at his very voice!"

"Would you have me, indeed, annihilate the memory of the bond between us?" said Roland, in a hollow voice; "would you have me see in you only the vile thief, the lawless felon,—deliver you up to justice, or strike you to my feet? Let the memory still save you, and begone!"

Again I caught hold of the guilty son, and again he broke from my grasp.

"It is," he said, folding his arms deliberately on his breast—"it is for me to command in this house; all who are within it must submit to my orders. You, sir, who hold reputation, name, and honor, at so high a price, how can you fail to see that you would rob them from the lady whom you would protect from the insult of my affection? How would the world receive the tale of your rescue of Miss Tre-

vanion? how believe that—Oh, pardon me, madam—Miss Trevanion—Fanny—pardon me—I am mad; only hear me—alone—alone—and then if you, too, say 'Begone,' I submit without a murmur; I allow no arbiter but you."

But Fanny still clung closer, and closer still, to Roland. At that moment I heard voices and the trampling of feet below, and supposing that the accomplices in this villany were mustering courage, perhaps, to mount to the assistance of their employer, I lost all the compassion that had hitherto softened my horror of the young man's crime, and all the awe with which that confession had been attended. I therefore, this time, seized the false Vivian with a gripe that he could no longer shake off, and said sternly—

"Beware how you aggravate your offence. If strife ensues, it will not be between father and son, and—"

Fanny sprang forward. "Do not provoke this bad, dangerous man. I fear him not. Sir, I *will* hear you, and alone."

"Never!" cried I and Roland simultaneously.

Vivian turned his look fiercely to me, and with a sullen bitterness to his father, and then, as if resigning his former prayer, he said—"Well, then, be it so; even in the presence of those who judge me so severely, I will speak, at least." He paused, and throwing into his voice a passion that, had the repugnance at his guilt been less, would not have been without pathos, he continued to address Fanny: "I own that, when I first saw you, I might have thought of love, as the poor and ambitious think of the way to wealth and power. Those thoughts vanished, and nothing remained in my heart but love and madness. I was as a man in a delirium when I planned this snare. I knew but one object—saw but one heavenly vision. Oh! mine—mine at least in that vision—are you indeed lost to me for ever!"

There was that in this man's tone and manner which, whether arising from accomplished hypocrisy, or actual, if perverted feeling would, I thought, find its way at once to the heart of a woman who, however wronged, had once loved him; and, with a cold misgiving, I fixed my eyes on Miss Trevanion. Her look, as she turned with a visible tremor, suddenly met mine, and I believe that she discerned my doubt, for after suffering her eyes to rest on my own, with something of mournful reproach, her lips curved as with the pride of her mother, and for the first time in my life I saw anger on her brow.

"It is well, sir, that you have thus spoken to me in the presence of others, for in their presence I call upon you to say, by that honor which the son of this gentleman may for a while forget, but cannot wholly forfeit,—I call upon you to say, whether by deed, word, or sign, I, Frances Trevanion, ever gave you cause to believe that I returned the feeling you say you entertained for me, or encouraged you to dare this attempt to place me in your power."

"No!" cried Vivian, readily, but with a writhing lip—"no; but where I loved so deeply, perilled all my fortune for one fair and free occasion to tell you so alone, I would not think that such love could meet only loathing and disdain. What!—has nature shaped me so unkindly, that where I love no love can reply? What! has the accident of birth shut me out from the right to woo and mate with the high-born? For the last, at least that gentleman in justice should tell you, since it has been his care to instil the naughty lesson into me, that my lineage is one that befits lofty hopes, and warrants fearless ambition. My hopes, my ambition—they were you! Oh, Miss Trevanion, it is true that to win you I would have braved the world's laws, defied every foe, save him who now rises before me. Yet, believe me, believe me, had I won what I dared to aspire to, you would not have been disgraced by your choice; and the name, for which I thank not my father, should not have been despised by the woman who pardoned my presumption, nor by the man who now tramples on my anguish and curses me in my desolation."

Not by a word had Roland sought to interrupt his son—nay, by a feverish excitement, which my heart understood in its secret sympathy, he had seemed eagerly to court every syllable that could extenuate the darkness of the offence, or even imply some less sordid motive for the baseness of the means. But as the son now closed with the words of unjust reproach, and the accents of fierce despair—closed a defence that showed, in its false pride and its perverted eloquence, so utter a blindness to every principle of that Honor which had been the father's idol, Roland placed his hand

before the eyes that he had previously, as if spell-bound, fixed on the hardened offender, and once more drawing Fanny towards him, said—

"His breath pollutes the air that innocence and honesty should breathe. He says 'All in this house are at his command,'—why do we stay?—let us go." He turned towards the door, and Fanny with him.

Meanwhile the louder sounds below had been silenced for some moments, but I heard a step in the hall. Vivian started, and placed himself before us.

"No, no, you cannot leave me thus, Miss Trevanion. I resign you—be it so; I do not even ask for pardon. But to leave this house thus, without carriage, without attendants, without explanation!—the blame falls on me—it shall do so. But at least vouchsafe me the right to repair what I yet can repair of the wrong, to protect all that is left to me—your name."

As he spoke, he did not perceive (for he was facing us, and with his back to the door) that a new actor had noiselessly entered on the scene, and, pausing by the threshold, heard his last words.

"The name of Miss Trevanion, sir—and from what?" asked the new comer, as he advanced and surveyed Vivian with a look that, but for its quiet, would have seemed disdain.

"Lord Castleton!" exclaimed Fanny, lifting up the face she had buried in her hands.

Vivian recoiled in dismay, and gnashed his teeth.

"Sir," said the marquis, "I await your reply; for not even you, in my presence, shall imply that one reproach can be attached to the name of that lady."

"Oh, moderate your tone to me, my Lord Castleton!" cried Vivian: "in you at least there is one man I am not forbidden to brave and defy. It was to save that lady from the cold ambition of her parents—it was to prevent the sacrifice of her youth and beauty, to one whose sole merits are his wealth and his titles—it was this that impelled me to the crime I have committed, this that hurried me on to risk all for one hour, when youth at least could plead its cause to youth; and this gives me now the power to say that it does rest with me to protect the name of the lady, whom your very servility to that world which you have made your idol forbids you to claim from the heartless ambition that would sacrifice the daughter to the vanity of the parents. Ha! the future Marchioness of Castleton on her way to Scotland with a penniless adventurer! Ha! if my lips are sealed, who but I can seal the lips of those below in my secret? The secret shall be kept, but on this condition—you shall not triumph where I have failed; I may lose what I adored, but I do not resign it to another. Ha! have I foiled you, my Lord Castleton?—ha, ha!"

"No, sir; and I almost forgive you the villany you have *not* effected, for informing me, for the first time, that had I presumed to address Miss Trevanion, her parents at least would have pardoned the presumption. Trouble not yourself as to what your accomplices may say. They have already confessed their infamy and your own. Out of my path, sir!"

Then, with the benign look of a father, and the lofty grace of a prince, Lord Castleton advanced to Fanny. Looking round with a shudder, she hastily placed her hand in his, and, by so doing, perhaps prevented some violence on the part of Vivian, whose heaving breast, and eye bloodshot, and still unquailing, showed how little even shame had subdued his fiercer passions. But he made no offer to detain them, and his tongue seemed to cleave to his lips. Now, as Fanny moved to the door, she passed Roland, who stood motionless and with vacant looks, like an image of stone; and with a beautiful tenderness, for which (even at this distant date, recalling it), I say, "God requite thee, Fanny," she laid her other hand on Roland's arm, and said, "Come too: *your* arm still!"

But Roland's limbs trembled and refused to stir; his head, relaxing, drooped on his breast, his eyes closed. Even Lord Castleton was so struck (though unable to guess the true and terrible cause of his dejection) that he forgot his desire to hasten from the spot, and cried with all his kindliness of heart, "You are ill—you faint; give him your arm, Pisistratus."

"It is nothing," said Roland, feebly, as he leant heavily on my arm, while I turned back my head with all the bitterness of that reproach which filled my heart, speaking in the eyes that sought *him*, whose place should have been where mine now was. And, oh!—thank heaven, thank heaven!—the look was not in vain. In the

same moment the son was at the father's knees.

"Oh, pardon—pardon! Wretch, lost wretch though I be, I bow my head to the curse. Let it fall—but on me, and on me, only—not on your own heart too."

Fanny burst into tears, sobbing out, "Forgive him, as I do."

Roland did not heed her.

"He thinks that the heart was not shattered before the curse could come," he said, in a voice so weak as to be scarcely audible. Then, raising his eyes to heaven, his lips moved as if he prayed inly. Pausing, he stretched his hands over his son's head, and averting his face, said, "I revoke the curse. Pray to thy God for pardon."

Perhaps not daring to trust himself further, he then made a violent effort, and hurried from the room.

We followed silently. When we gained the end of the passage, the door of the room we had left closed with a sullen jar.

As the sound smote on my ear, with it came so terrible a sense of the solitude upon which that door had closed—so keen and quick an apprehension of some fearful impulse, suggested by passions so fierce, to a condition so forlorn—that instinctively I stopped, and then hurried back to the chamber. The lock of the door having been previously forced, there was no barrier to oppose my entrance. I advanced, and beheld a spectacle of such agony, as can only be conceived by those who have looked on the grief which takes no fortitude from reason, no consolation from conscience—the grief which tells us what would be the earth were man abandoned to his passions, and the CHANCE of the atheist reigned alone in the merciless heavens. Pride humbled to the dust; ambition shivered into fragments; love (or the passion mistaken for it) blasted into ashes; life, at the first onset, bereaved of its holiest ties, forsaken by its truest guide; shame that writhed for revenge, and remorse that knew not prayer—all, all blended, yet distinct, were in that awful spectacle of the guilty son.

And I had told but twenty years, and my heart had been mellowed in the tender sunshine of a happy home, and I had loved this boy as a stranger, and, lo!—he was Roland's son! I forgot all else, looking upon that anguish; and I threw myself on the ground by the form that writhed there, and, folding my arms round the breast which in vain repelled me, I whispered, "Comfort—comfort—life is long. You shall redeem the past, you shall efface the stain, and your father shall bless you yet!"

CHAPTER II.

I COULD not stay long with my unhappy cousin, but still I stayed long enough to make me think it probable that Lord Castleton's carriage would have left the inn: and when, as I passed the hall, I saw it standing before the open door, I was seized with fear for Roland; his emotions might have ended in some physical attack. Nor were those fears without foundation. I found Fanny kneeling beside the old soldier in the parlor where we had seen the two women, and bathing his temples, while Lord Castleton was binding his arm; and the marquis's favorite valet, who, amongst his other gifts, was something of a surgeon, was wiping the blade of the penknife that had served instead of a lancet. Lord Castleton nodded to me, "Don't be uneasy—a little fainting fit—we have bled him. He is safe now—see, he is recovering."

Roland's eyes, as they opened, turned to me with an anxious, inquiring look. I smiled upon him as I kissed his forehead, and could, with a safe conscience, whisper words which neither father nor Christian could refuse to receive as comfort.

In a few minutes more we had left the house. As Lord Castleton's carriage only held two, the marquis, having assisted Miss Trevanion and Roland to enter, quietly mounted the seat behind, and made a sign to me to come by his side, for there was room for both. (His servant had taken one of the horses that had brought thither Roland and myself, and already gone on before.) No conversation took place between us then. Lord Castleton seemed profoundly affected, and I had no words at my command.

When we reached the inn at which Lord Castleton had changed horses, about six miles distant, the marquis insisted on Fanny's taking some rest for a few hours, for indeed she was thoroughly worn out.

I attended my uncle to his room, but he

only answered my assurances of his son's repentance with a pressure of the hand, and then, gliding from me, went into the farthest recess of the room, and there knelt down. When he rose, he was passive and tractable as a child. He suffered me to assist him to undress; and when he had lain down on the bed, he turned his face quietly from the light, and, after a few heavy sighs, sleep seemed mercifully to steal upon him. I listened to his breathing till it grew low and regular, and then descended to the sitting-room in which I had left Lord Castleton, for he had asked me in a whisper to seek him there.

I found the marquis seated by the fire, in a thoughtful and dejected attitude.

"I am glad you are come," said he, making room for me on the hearth, "for I assure you I have not felt so mournful for many years; we have much to explain to each other. Will you begin: they say the sound of the bell dissipates the thunder-cloud. And there is nothing like the voice of a frank, honest nature to dispel all the clouds that come upon us when we think of our own faults and the villany of others. But I beg you a thousand pardons —that young man, your relation !—your brave uncle's son ! Is it possible ! "

My explanations to Lord Castleton were necessarily brief and imperfect. The separation between Roland and his son, my ignorance of its cause, my belief in the death of the latter, my chance acquaintance with the supposed Vivian; the interest I took in him; the relief it was to the fears for his fate with which he inspired me, to think he had returned to the home I ascribed to him: and the circumstances which had induced my suspicions, justified by the result—all this was soon hurried over.

"But, I beg your pardon," said the marquis, interrupting me, "did you, in your friendship for one so unlike you, even by your own partial account, never suspect that you had stumbled upon your lost cousin ? "

"Such an idea never could have crossed me."

And here I must observe, that though the reader, at the first introduction of Vivian, would divine the secret,—the penetration of a reader is wholly different from that of the actor in events. That I had chanced on one of those curious coincidences in the romance of real life, which a reader looks out for and expects in following the course of narrative, was a supposition forbidden to me by a variety of causes. There was not the least family resemblance between Vivian and any of his relations; and, somehow or other, in Roland's son I had pictured to myself a form and a character wholly different from Vivian's. To me it would have seemed impossible that my cousin could have been so little curious to hear any of our joint family affairs; been so unheedful, or even weary, if I spoke of Roland—never, by a word or tone, have betrayed a sympathy with his kindred. And my other conjecture was so probable !—son of the Colonel Vivian whose name he bore. And that letter, with the post-mark of "Godalming ! " and my belief, too, in my cousin's death; even now I am not surprised that the idea never occurred to me.

I paused from enumerating these excuses for my dulness, angry with myself, for I noticed that Lord Castleton's fair brow darkened;—and he exclaimed, "What deceit he must have gone through before he could become such a master in the art ! "

"That is true, and I cannot deny it," said I. "But his punishment now is awful: let us hope that repentance may follow the chastisement. And, though certainly it must have been his own fault that drove him from his father's home and guidance, yet, so driven, let us make some allowance for the influence of evil companionship on one so young—for the suspicions that the knowledge of evil produces, and turns into a kind of false knowledge of the world. And in this last and worst of all his actions"—

"Ah, how justify that ? "

"Justify it !—good heavens ! justify it !—no. I only say this, strange as it may seem, that I believe his affection for Miss Trevanion was for herself: so he says, from the depth of an anguish in which the most insincere of men would cease to feign. But no more of this,—she is saved, thank Heaven ! "

"And you believe," said Lord Castleton musingly, "that he spoke the truth when he thought that I "— The marquis stopped, colored slightly, and then went on. "But no; Lady Ellinor and Trevanion, whatever might have been in their thoughts, would never have so forgot their dignity as to take him, a youth —almost a stranger—nay, take any one into their confidence on such a subject."

"It was but by broken gasps, incoherent,

disconnected words, that Vivian,—I mean my cousin,—gave me any explanation of this. But Lady N——, at whose house he was staying, appears to have entertained such a notion, or at least led my cousin to think so."

"Ah! that is possible," said Lord Castleton, with a look of relief. "Lady N—— and I were boy and girl together; we correspond; she has written to me suggesting that——Ah! I see,—an indiscreet woman. Hum! this comes of lady correspondents!"

Lord Castleton had recourse to the Beaudesert mixture; and then, as if eager to change the subject, began his own explanation. On receiving my letter, he saw even more cause to suspect a snare than I had done, for he had that morning received a letter from Trevanion, not mentioning a word about his illness: and on turning to the newspaper, and seeing a paragraph headed, "Sudden and alarming illness of Mr. Trevanion," the marquis had suspected some party manœuvre or unfeeling hoax, since the mail that had brought the letter must have travelled as quickly as any messenger who had given the information to the newspaper. He had, however, immediately sent down to the office of the journal to inquire on what authority the paragraph had been inserted, while he despatched another messenger to St. James's Square. The reply from the office was, that the message had been brought by a servant in Mr. Trevanion's livery, but was not admitted as news until it had been ascertained by inquiries at the minister's house that Lady Ellinor had received the same intelligence, and actually left town in consequence.

"I was extremely sorry for poor Lady Ellinor's uneasiness," said Lord Castleton, "and extremely puzzled, but I still thought there could be no real ground for alarm until your letter reached me. And when you there stated your conviction that Mr. Gower was mixed up in this fable, and that it concealed some snare upon Fanny, I saw the thing at a glance. The road to Lord N——'s, till within the last stage or two, would be the road to Scotland. And a hardy and unscrupulous adventurer, with the assistance of Miss Trevanion's servants, might thus entrap her to Scotland itself, and there work on her fears; or, if he had hope in her affections, entrap her into consent to a Scotch marriage. You may be sure, therefore, that I was on the road as soon as possible. But as your messenger came all the way from the city, and not so quickly perhaps as he might have come; and then, as there was the carriage to see to, and the horses to send for, I found myself more than an hour and a half behind you. Fortunately, however, I made good ground, and should probably have overtaken you half-way, but that, on passing between a ditch and wagon, the carriage was upset, and that somewhat delayed me. On arriving at the town where the road branched off to Lord N——'s, I was rejoiced to learn you had taken what I was sure would prove the right direction, and finally I gained the clue to that villanous inn, by the report of the post-boys who had taken Miss Trevanion's carriage there, and met you on the road. On reaching the inn, I found two fellows conferring outside the door. They sprang in as we drove up, but not before my servant Summers—a quick fellow, you know, who has travelled with me from Norway to Nubia—had quitted his seat, and got into the house, into which I followed him with a step, you dog, as active as your own! Egad! I was twenty-one then! Two fellows had already knocked down poor Summers and showed plenty of fight. Do you know," said the marquis, interrupting himself with an air of serio-comic humiliation—"Do you know that I actually—no, you never will believe it—mind 'tis a secrect—actually broke my cane over one fellow's shoulders?—look!" (and the marquis held up the fragment of the lamented weapon). "And I half suspect, but I can't say positively, that I had even the necessity to demean myself by a blow with the naked hand—clenched too!—quite Eton again—upon my honor it was. Ha, ha!"

And the marquis—whose magnificent proportions, in the full vigor of man's strongest, if not his most combative, age, would have made him a formidable antagonist, even to a couple of prize-fighters, supposing he had retained a little of Eton skill in such encounters—laughed with the glee of a school-boy, whether at the thought of his prowess, or his sense of the contrast beween so rude a recourse to primitive warfare, and his own indolent habits, and almost feminine good temper. Composing himself, however, with the quick recollection how little I could share his hilarity, he resumed gravely, "It took us some time—I don't say to defeat our foes; but to bind them,

which I thought a necessary precaution;—one fellow, Trevanion's servant, all the while stunning me with quotations from Shakspeare. I then gently laid hold of a gown, the bearer of which had been long trying to scratch me; but being luckily a small woman, had not succeeded in reaching to my eyes. But the gown escaped, and fluttered off to the kitchen. I followed, and there I found Miss Trevanion's Jezebel of a maid. She was terribly frightened, and affected to be extremely penitent. I own to you that I don't care what a man says in the way of slander, but a woman's tongue against another woman—especially if that tongue be in the mouth of a lady's lady—I think it always worth silencing; I therefore consented to pardon this woman on condition she would find her way here before morning. No scandal shall come from her. Thus you see some minutes elapsed before I joined you; but I minded that the less, as I heard you and the Captain were already in the room with Miss Trevanion; and not, alas! dreaming of your connection with the culprit, I was wondering what could have delayed you so long,—afraid, I own it, to find that Miss Trevanion's heart might have been seduced by that—hem—hem! —handsome—young—hem—hem!—There's no fear of that!" added Lord Castleton, anxiously, as he bent his bright eyes upon mine.

I felt myself color as I answered firmly, "It is just to Miss Trevanion to add, that the unhappy man owned, in her presence and in mine, that he had never had the slightest encouragement for his attempt—never one cause to believe that she approved the affection which, I try to think, blinded and maddened himself."

"I believe you; for I think"— Lord Castleton paused uneasily, again looked at me, rose, and walked about the room with evident agitation; then, as if he had come to some resolution, he returned to the hearth and stood facing me.

"My dear young friend," said he, with his irresistible kindly frankness, "this is an occasion that excuses all things between us, even my impertinence. Your conduct from first to last has been such, that I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that I had a daughter to offer you, and that you felt for her as I believe you feel for Miss Trevanion. These are not mere words; do not look down as if ashamed. All the marquisates in the world would never give me the pride I should feel, if I could see in my life one steady self-sacrifice to duty and honor, equal to that which I have witnessed in you."

"Oh, my lord! my lord!"

"Hear me out. That you love Fanny Trevanion I know; that she may have innocently, timidly, half-unconsciously, returned that affection, I think probable. But"—

"I know what you would say; spare me—I know it all."

"No! it is a thing impossible; and, if Lady Ellinor could consent, there would be such a life-long regret on her part, such a weight of obligation on yours, that—no, I repeat, it is impossible! But let us both think of this poor girl. I know her better than you can—have known her from a child; know all her virtues—they are charming; all her faults—they expose her to danger. These parents of hers—with their genius and ambition—may do very well to rule England, and influence the world; but to guide the fate of that child—no!" Lord Castleton stopped, for he was affected. I felt my old jealousy return, but it was no longer bitter.

"I say nothing," continued the marquis, "of this position, in which, without fault of hers, Miss Trevanion is placed: Lady Ellinor's knowledge of the world, and woman's wit, will see how all that can be best put right. Still it is awkward, and demands much consideration. But, putting this aside altogether, if you do firmly believe that Miss Trevanion is lost to you, can you bear to think that she is to be flung as a mere cypher into the account of the worldly greatness of an aspiring politician—married to some minister, too busy to watch over her; or some duke, who looks to pay off his mortgages with her fortune—minister or duke only regarded as a prop to Trevanion's power against a counter cabal, or as giving his section a preponderance in the Cabinet? Be assured such is her most likely destiny, or rather the beginning of a destiny yet more mournful. Now, I tell you this, that he who marries Fanny Trevanion should have little other object, for the first few years of marriage, than to correct her failings and develop her virtues. Believe one who, alas! has too dearly bought his knowledge of woman—hers is a character to be formed. Well, then, if

this prize be lost to you, would it be an irreparable grief to your generous affection to think that it has fallen to the lot of one who at least knows his responsibilities, and who will redeem his own life, hitherto wasted, by the steadfast endeavor to fulfil them? Can you take this hand still, and press it, even though it be a rival's?"

"My lord! This from you to me, is an honor that—"

"You will not take my hand? Then, believe me, it is not I that will give that grief to your heart."

Touched, penetrated, melted by this generosity in a man of such lofty claims, to one of my age and fortunes, I pressed that noble hand, half raising it to my lips—an action of respect that would have misbecome neither; but he gently withdrew the hand, in the instinct of his natural modesty. I had then no heart to speak further on such a subject, but, faltering out that I would go and see my uncle, I took up the light, and ascended the stairs. I crept noiselessly into Roland's room, and shading the light, saw that, though he slept, his face was very troubled. And then I thought, "What are my young griefs to his?" and sitting beside the bed, communed with my own heart and was still!

CHAPTER III.

At sunrise I went down into the sitting-room, having resolved to write to my father to join us; for I felt how much Roland needed his comfort and his counsel, and it was no great distance from the old Tower. I was surprised to find Lord Castleton still seated by the fire; he had evidently not gone to bed.

"That's right," said he; "we must encourage each other to recruit nature," and he pointed to the breakfast things on the table.

I had scarcely tasted food for many hours, but I was only aware of my own hnnger by a sensation of faintness. I eat unconsciously, and was almost ashamed to feel how much the food restored me.

"I suppose," said I, "that you will soon set off to Lord N.'s?"

"Nay, did I not tell you, that I have sent Summers express, with a note to Lady Ellinor, begging her to come here? I did not see, on reflection, how I could decorously accompany Miss Trevanion alone, without even a female servant, to a house full of gossiping guests. And even had your uncle been well enough to go with us, his presence would but have created an additional cause for wonder; so, as soon as we arrived, and while you went up with the Captain, I wrote my letter and despatched my man. I expect Lady Ellinor will be here before nine o'clock. Meanwhile, I have already seen that infamous waiting-woman, and taken care to prevent any danger from her garrulity. And you will be pleased to hear that I have hit upon a mode of satisfying the curiosity of our friend Mrs. Grundy—that is, 'the World'—without injury to any one. We must suppose that that footman of Trevanion's was out of his mind—it is but a charitable, and your good father would say, a philosophical supposition. All great knavery is madness! The world could not get on if truth and goodness were not the natural tendencies of sane minds. Do you understand?"

"Not quite."

"Why, the footman, being out of his mind, invented this mad story of Trevanion's illness, frightened Lady Ellinor and Miss Trevanion out of their wits with his own chimera, and hurried them both off, one after the other. I having heard from Trevanion, and knowing he could not have been ill when the servant left him, set off, as was natural in so old a friend of the family, saved her from the freaks of a maniac, who, getting more and more flighty, was beginning to play the Jack o' Lantern, and leading her, Heaven knows where! over the country;—and then wrote to Lady Ellinor to come to her. It is but a hearty laugh at our expense, and Mrs. Grundy is content. If you don't want her to pity, or backbite, let her laugh. She is a she Cerberus—she wants to eat you: well—stop her mouth with a cake.

"Yes," continued this better sort of Aristippus, so wise under all his seeming levities; "the cue thus given, everything favors it. If that rogue of a lackey quoted Shakspeare as much in the servants' hall as he did while I was binding him neck and heels in the kitchen, that's enough for all the household to declare he was moon-stricken; and if we find it necessary to do anything more, why, we must induce him to go into Bedlam for a month or two. The

disappearance of the waiting woman is natural; either I or Lady Ellinor send her about her business for her folly in being so gulled by the lunatic. If that's unjust, why, injustice to servants is common enough—public and private. Neither minister nor lackey can be forgiven, if he help us into a scrape. One must vent one's passion on something. Witness my poor cane: though, indeed, a better illustration would be the cane that Louis XIV. broke on a footman, because his majesty was out of humor with a prince, whose shoulders were too sacred for royal indignation.

"So you see," concluded Lord Castleton, lowering his voice, "that your uncle, amongst all his other causes of sorrow, may think at least that his name is spared in his son's. And the young man himself may find reform easier, when freed from that despair of the possibility of redemption, which Mrs. Grundy inflicts upon those who—Courage, then; life is long!"

"My very words!" I cried; "and so repeated by you, Lord Castleton, they seem prophetic."

"Take my advice, and don't lose sight of your cousin, while his pride is yet humbled, and his heart perhaps softened. I don't say this only for his sake. No, it is your poor uncle I think of: noble old fellow. And now, I think it right to pay Lady Ellinor the respect of repairing, as well as I can, the havoc three sleepless nights have made on the exterior of a gentleman who is on the shady side of remorseless forty."

Lord Castleton here left me, and I wrote to my father, begging him to meet us at the next stage (which was the nearest point from the high road to the Tower), and I sent off the letter by a messenger on horseback. That task done, I leant my head upon my hand, and a profound sadness settled upon me, despite all my efforts to face the future, and think only of the duties of life—not its sorrows.

CHAPTER IV.

Before nine o'clock, Lady Ellinor arrived, and went straight into Miss Trevanion's room. I took refuge in my uncle's. Roland was awake and calm, but so feeble that he made no effort to rise; and it was his calm, indeed, that alarmed me the most—it was like the calm of nature thoroughly exhausted. He obeyed me mechanically, as a patient takes from your hand the draught, of which he is almost unconscious, when I pressed him to take food. He smiled on me faintly, when I spoke to him; but made me a sign that seemed to implore silence. Then he turned his face from me, and buried it in the pillow; and I thought that he slept again, when, raising himself a little, and feeling for my hand, he said in a scarcely audible voice,—

"Where is he?"

"Would you see him, sir?"

"No, no; that would kill me—and then—what would become of him?"

"He has promised me an interview, and in that interview I feel assured he will obey your wishes, whatever they are."

Roland made no answer.

"Lord Castleton has arranged all, so that his name and madness (thus let us call it) will never be known."

"Pride, pride! pride still!"—murmured the old soldier. "The name, the name—well, that is much; but the living soul!—I wish Austin were here."

"I have sent for him, sir."

Roland pressed my hand, and was again silent. Then he began to mutter, as I thought, incoherently, about the Peninsula and obeying orders; and how some officer woke Lord Wellington at night, and said that something or other (I could not catch what—the phrase was technical and military) was impossible; and how Lord Wellington asked "Where's the order-book?" and looking into the order-book, said, "Not at all impossible, for it is in the order-book;" and so Lord Wellington turned round and went to sleep again. Then suddenly Roland half rose, and said in a voice clear and firm, "But Lord Wellington, though a great captain, was a fallible man, sir, and the order-book was his own mortal handiwork.—Get me the Bible!"

Oh Roland, Roland! and I had feared that thy mind was wandering!

So I went down and borrowed a Bible, in large characters, and placed it on the bed before him, opening the shutters, and letting in God's day upon God's word.

I had just done this, when there was a slight knock at the door. I opened it, and Lord

Castleton stood without. He asked me, in a whisper, if he might see my uncle. I drew him in gently, and pointed to the soldier of life, "learning what was not impossible," from the unerring Order-Book.

Lord Castleton gazed with a changing countenance, and, without disturbing my uncle, stole back. I followed him, and gently closed the door.

"You must save his son," he said, in a faltering voice—"you must; and tell me how to help you. That sight!—no sermon ever touched me more. Now come down, and receive Lady Ellinor's thanks. We are going. She wants me to tell my own tale to my old friend, Mrs. Grundy: so I go with them. Come!"

On entering the sitting-room, Lady Ellinor came up and fairly embraced me. I need not repeat her thanks, still less the praises, which fell cold and hollow on my ear. My gaze rested on Fanny where she stood apart—her eyes, heavy with fresh tears, bent on the ground. And the sense of all her charms—the memory of the tender, exquisite kindness she had shown to the stricken father; the generous pardon she had extended to the criminal son; the looks she had bent upon me on that memorable night—looks that had spoken such trust in my presence—the moment in which she had clung to me for protection, and her breath been warm upon my cheek—all these rushed over me; and I felt that the struggle of months was undone—that I had never loved her as I loved her then—when I saw her but to lose her evermore! And then there came for the first, and, I now rejoice to think, for the only time, a bitter, ungrateful accusation against the cruelty of fortune and the disparities of life. What was it that set our two hearts eternally apart, and made hope impossible? Not nature, but the fortune that gives a second nature to the world. Ah, could I then think that it is in that second nature that the soul is ordained to seek its trials, and that the elements of human virtue find their harmonious place! What I answered I know not. Neither know I how long I stood there listening to sounds which seemed to have no meaning, till there came other sounds which indeed woke my sense, and made my blood run cold to hear,——the tramp of the horses, the grating of the wheels, the voice at the door that said, "All was ready."

Then Fanny lifted her eyes, and they met mine; and then involuntarily and hastily she moved a few steps towards me, and I clasped my right hand to my heart, as if to still its beating, and remained still. Lord Castleton had watched us both. I felt that watch was upon us, though I had till then shunned his looks: now, as I turned my eyes from Fanny's, that look came full upon me—soft, compassionate, benignant. Suddenly, and with an unutterable expression of nobleness, the marquis turned to Lady Ellinor, and said—"Pardon me for telling you an old story. A friend of mine—a man of my own years—had the temerity to hope that he might one day or other win the affections of a lady young enough to be his daughter, and whom circumstances and his own heart led him to prefer from all her sex. My friend had many rivals; and you will not wonder—for you have seen the lady.

"Among them was a young gentleman, who for months had been an inmate of the same house—(Hush, Lady Ellinor! you will hear me out; the interest of my story is to come)—who respected the sanctity of the house he had entered, and had left it when he felt he loved, for he was poor and the lady rich. Some time after, this gentleman saved the lady from a great danger, and was then on the eve of leaving England—(Hush! again—hush!) My friend was present when these two young persons met, before the probable absence of many years, and so was the mother of the lady to whose hand he still hoped one day to aspire. He saw that his young rival wished to say, 'Farewell!' and without a witness; that farewell was all that his honor and his reason could suffer him to say. My friend saw that the lady felt the natural gratitude for a great service, and the natural pity for a generous and unfortunate affection; for so, Lady Ellinor, he only interpreted the sob that reached his ear! What think you my friend did? Your high mind at once conjectures. He said to himself—'If I am ever to be blest with the heart which, in spite of disparity of years, I yet hope to win, let me show how entire is the trust that I place in its integrity and innocence: let the romance of first youth be closed—the farewell of pure hearts be spoken—unimbittered by the idle jealousies of one mean suspicion.' With that thought, which *you*, Lady Ellinor, will never stoop to blame, he placed his hand on

that of the noble mother, drew her gently towards the door, and calmly confident of the result, left these two young natures to the unwitnessed impulse of maiden honor and manly duty."

All this was said and done with a grace and earnestness that thrilled the listeners: word and action suited to each with so inimitable a harmony, that the spell was not broken till the voice ceased and the door closed.

That mournful bliss for which I had so pined was vouchsafed: I was alone with her to whom, indeed, honor and reason forbade me to say more than the last farewell.

It was some time before we recovered—before we *felt* that we were alone.

O, ye moments, that I can now recall with so little sadness in the mellow and sweet remembrance, rest ever holy and undisclosed in the solemn recesses of the heart. Yes!—whatever confession of weakness was interchanged, we were not unworthy of the trust that permitted the mournful consolation of the parting. No trite love-tale—with vows not to be fulfilled, and hopes that the future must belie—mocked the realities of the life that lay before us. Yet on the confines of the dream we saw the day rising cold upon the world: and if—children as we well-nigh were—we shrunk somewhat from the light, we did not blaspheme the sun, and cry "There is darkness in the dawn!"

All that we attempted was to comfort and strengthen each other for that which must be: not seeking to conceal the grief we felt, but promising, with simple faith, to struggle against the grief. If vow were pledged between us—*that* was the vow—each for the other's sake would strive to enjoy the blessings Heaven left us still. Well may I say that we were children! I know not, in the broken words that passed between us, in the sorrowful hearts which those words revealed—I know not if there were that which they who own, in human passion, but the storm and the whirlwind, would call the love of maturer years—the love that gives fire to the song, and tragedy to the stage; but I know that there was neither a word nor a thought which made the sorrow of the children a rebellion to the heavenly Father.

And again the door unclosed, and Fanny walked with a firm step to her mother's side, and, pausing there, extended her hand to me, and said, as I bent over it, "Heaven WILL be with you!"

A word from Lady Ellinor; a frank smile from him—the rival; one last, last glance from the soft eyes of Fanny, and then Solitude rushed upon me—rushed, as something visible, palpable, overpowering. I felt it in the glare of the sunbeam—I heard it in the breath of the air! like a Ghost it rose there—where *she* had filled the space with her presence but a moment before. A something seemed gone from the universe for ever; a change like that of death passed through my being; and when I woke to feel that my being lived again, I knew that it was my youth and its poet-land that were no more, and that I had passed, with an unconscious step, which never could retrace its way, into the hard world of laborious man!

PART SIXTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

"PLEASE, sir, be this note for you?" asked the waiter.

"For me—yes; it is my name."

I did not recognize the handwriting, and yet the note was from one whose writing I had often seen. But formerly the writing was cramped, stiff, perpendicular (a feigned hand, though I guessed not it was feigned); now it was hasty, irregular, impatient—scarce a letter formed, scarce a word that seemed finished—and yet strangely legible withal, as the handwriting of a bold man almost always is. I opened the note listlessly, and read—

"I have watched for you all the morning. I saw her go. Well!—I did not throw myself under the hoofs of the horses. I write this in a public-house, not far. Will you follow the bearer, and see once again the outcast whom all the rest of the world will shun?"

Though I did not recognize the hand, there could be no doubt who was the writer.

"The boy wants to know if there's an answer," said the waiter.

I nodded, took up my hat, and left the room. A ragged boy was standing in the yard, and scarcely six words passed between us, before I was following him through a narrow lane that faced the inn, and terminated in a turnstile. Here the boy paused, and making me a sign to go on, went back his way whistling. I passed the turnstile, and found myself in a green field, with a row of stunted willows hanging over a narrow rill. I looked round, and saw Vivian (as I intend still to call him) half kneeling, and seemingly intent upon some object in the grass.

My eye followed his mechanically. A young unfledged bird that had left the nest too soon, stood, all still and alone, on the bare short sward—its beak open as for food, its gaze fixed on us with a wistful stare. Methought there was something in the forlorn bird that softened me more to the forlorner youth, of whom it seemed a type.

"Now," said Vivian, speaking half to himself, half to me, "did the bird fall from the nest, or leave the nest at its own wild whim? The parent does not protect it. Mind, I say not it is the parent's fault—perhaps the fault is all with the wanderer. But, look you, though the parent is not here, the foe is!—yonder, see!"

And the young man pointed to a large brindled cat, that, kept back from its prey by our unwelcome neighborhood, still remained watchful, a few paces off, stirring its tail gently backwards and forwards, and with that stealthy look in its round eyes, dulled by the sun—half fierce, half frightened—which belongs to its tribe, when man comes between the devourer and the victim.

"I do see," said I; "but a passing footstep has saved the bird!"

"Stop!" said Vivian, laying my hand on his own—and with his old bitter smile on his lip—"stop! do you think it mercy to save the bird? What from? and what for? From a natural enemy—from a short pang and a quick death? Fie!—is not that better than slow starvation? or, if you take more heed of it, than the prison-bars of a cage? You cannot restore the nest, you cannot recall the parent! Be wiser in your mercy: leave the bird to its gentlest fate!"

I looked hard on Vivian; the lip had lost the bitter smile. He rose and turned away. I sought to take up the poor bird, but it did not know its friends, and ran from me, chirping piteously—ran towards the very jaws of the grim enemy. I was only just in time to scare

away the beast, which sprang up a tree, and glared down through the hanging boughs. Then I followed the bird, and, as I followed, I heard, not knowing at first whence the sound came, a short, quick, tremulous note. Was it near? was it far?—from the earth? in the sky?—Poor parent-bird! like parent-love, it seemed now far and now near; now on earth, now in sky!

And at last, quick and sudden, as if born of the space, lo! the little wings hovered over me!

The young bird halted, and I also.

"Come," said I, "ye have found each other at last; settle it between you!"

I went back to the outcast.

CHAPTER II.

PISISTRATUS.—How came you to know we had stayed in the town?

VIVIAN.—Do you think I could remain where you left me? I wandered out—wandered hither. Passing at dawn through yon streets, I saw the ostlers loitering by the gates of the yard, overheard them talk, and so knew you were all at the inn—all! (He sighed heavily.)

PISISTRATUS.—Your poor father is very ill! O cousin, how could you fling from you so much love!

VIVIAN.—Love!—his!—my father's!

PISISTRATUS.—Do you really not believe, then, that your father loved you?

VIVIAN.—If I had believed it, I had never left him! All the gold of the Indies had never bribed me to leave my mother!

PISISTRATUS.—This is indeed a strange misconception of yours. If we can remove it, all may be well yet. Need there now be any secrets between us? (persuasively.) Sit down, and tell me all, cousin.

After some hesitation, Vivian complied; and by the clearing of his brow, and the very tone of his voice, I felt sure that he was no longer seeking to disguise the truth. But, as I afterwards learned the father's tale as well as now the son's, so, instead of repeating Vivian's words, which—not by design, but by the twist of a mind habitually wrong—distorted the facts, I will state what appears to me the real case, as between the parties so unhappily opposed. Reader, pardon me if the recital be tedious. And if thou thinkest that I bear not hard enough on the erring hero of the story, remember that he who recites judges as Austin's son must judge of Roland's.

CHAPTER III.

VIVIAN.

AT THE ENTRANCE OF LIFE SITS—THE MOTHER.

IT was during the war in Spain that a severe wound, and the fever which ensued, detained Roland at the house of a Spanish widow. His hostess had once been rich; but her fortune had been ruined in the general calamities of the country. She had an only daughter, who assisted to nurse and tend the wounded Englishman; and when the time approached for Roland's departure, the frank grief of the young Ramouna betrayed the impression that the guest had made upon her affections. Much of gratitude, and something, it might be, of an exquisite sense of honor, aided, in Roland's breast, the charm naturally produced by the beauty of his young nurse, and the knightly compassion he felt for her ruined fortunes and desolate condition.

In one of these hasty impulses common to a generous nature—and which too often fatally vindicate the rank of Prudence amidst the tutelary Powers of Life—Roland committed the error of marriage with a girl of whose connections he knew nothing, and of whose nature little more than its warm spontaneous susceptibility. In a few days subsequent to these rash nuptials, Roland rejoined the march of the army; nor was he able to return to Spain till after the crowning victory of Waterloo.

Maimed by the loss of a limb, and with the scars of many a noble wound still fresh, Roland then hastened to a home, the dreams of which had soothed the bed of pain, and now replaced the earlier visions of renown. During his absence a son had been born to him—a son whom he might rear to take the place he had left in his country's service; to renew, in some future fields, a career that had failed the romance of his own antique and chivalrous ambition. As soon as that news had reached him, his care had been to provide an English

nurse for the infant—so that, with the first sounds of the mother's endearments, the child might yet hear a voice from the father's land. A female relation of Bolt's had settled in Spain, and was induced to undertake this duty. Natural as this appointment was to a man so devotedly English, it displeased his wild and passionate Ramouna. She had that mother's jealousy, strongest in minds uneducated; she had also that peculiar pride which belongs to her country-people, of every rank and condition; the jealousy and the pride were both wounded by the sight of the English nurse at the child's cradle.

That Roland, on regaining his Spanish hearth, should be disappointed in his expectations of the happiness awaiting him there, was the inevitable condition of such a marriage; since, not the less for his military bluntness, Roland had that refinement of feeling, perhaps over-fastidious, which belongs to all natures essentially poetic: and as the first illusions of love died away, there could have been little indeed congenial to his stately temper in one divided from him by an utter absence of education, and by the strong, but nameless, distinctions of national views and manners. The disappointment, probably, however, went deeper than that which usually attends an ill-assorted union; for, instead of bringing his wife to his old Tower (an expatriation which she would doubtless have resisted to the utmost), he accepted, maimed as he was, not very long after his return to Spain, the offer of a military post under Ferdinand. The Cavalier doctrines and intense loyalty of Roland attached him, without reflection, to the service of the throne which the English arms had contributed to establish; while the extreme unpopularity of the Constitutional Party in Spain, and the stigma of irreligion fixed to it by the priests, aided to foster Roland's belief that he was supporting a beloved king against the professors of those revolutionary and Jacobinical doctrines, which to him were the very atheism of politics. The experience of a few years in the service of a bigot so contemptible as Ferdinand, whose highest object of patriotism was the restoration of the Inquisition, added another disappointment to those which had already embittered the life of a man who had seen in the grand hero of Cervantes no follies to satirize, but high virtues to imitate. Poor Quixote himself—he came mournfully back to his La Mancha, with no other reward for his knight-errantry than a decoration which he disdained to place beside his simple Waterloo medal, and a grade for which he would have blushed to resign his more modest, but more honorable English dignity.

But, still weaving hopes, the sanguine man returned to his Penates. His child now had grown from infancy into boyhood—the child would pass naturally into his care. Delightful occupation !—At the thought, home smiled again.

Now, behold the most pernicious circumstance in this ill-omened connection.

The father of Ramouna had been one of that strange and mysterious race which presents in Spain so many features distinct from the characteristics of its kindred tribes in more civilized lands. The Gitano, or gypsey of Spain, is not the mere vagrant we see on our commons and road-sides. Retaining, indeed, much of his lawless principles and predatory inclinations, he lives often in towns, exercises various callings, and not unfrequently becomes rich. A wealthy Gitano had married a Spanish woman:* Roland's wife had been the offspring of this marriage. The Gitano had died while Ramouna was yet extremely young, and her childhood had been free from the influences of her paternal kindred. But, though her mother, retaining her own religion, had brought up Ramouna in the same faith, pure from the godless creed of the Gitano—and, at her husband's death, had separated herself wholly from his tribe—still she had lost caste with her own kin and people. And while struggling to regain it, the fortune, which made her sole chance of success in that attempt, was swept away, so that she had remained apart and solitary, and could bring no friends to cheer the solitude of Ramouna during Roland's absence. But, while my uncle was still in the service of Ferdinand, the widow died; and then the only relatives who came round Ramouna were her father's kindred. They had not ventured to claim affinity while her mother lived; and they did so now, by attentions and caresses to her son. This opened to them at once Ramouna's heart and doors. Meanwhile the English nurse—who, in spite of

* A Spaniard very rarely indeed marries a Gitana, or female gypsey. But occasionally (observes Mr. Borrow) a wealthy Gitano marries a Spanish female.

all that could render her abode odious to her, had, from strong love to her charge, stoutly maintained her post—died, a few weeks after Ramouna's mother, and no healthful influence remained to counteract those baneful ones to which the heir of the honest old Caxtons was subject. But Roland returned home in a humor to be pleased with all things. Joyously he clasped his wife to his breast, and thought, with self-reproach, that he had forborne too little, and exacted too much—he would be wiser now. Delightedly he acknowledged the beauty, the intelligence, and manly hearing of the boy, who played with his sword-knot, and ran off with his pistols as a prize.

The news of the Englishman's arrival at first kept the lawless kinsfolk from the house; but they were fond of the boy, and the boy of them, and interviews between him and these wild comrades, if stolen, were not less frequent. Gradually Roland's eyes became opened. As, in habitual intercourse, the boy abandoned the reserve which awe and cunning at first imposed, Roland was inexpressibly shocked at the bold principles his son affected, and at his utter incapacity even to comprehend that plain honesty and that frank honor which, to the English soldier, seemed ideas innate and heaven-planted. Soon afterwards, Roland found that a system of plunder was carried on in his household, and tracked it to the connivance of the wife and the agency of his son, for the benefit of lazy bravos and dissolute vagrants. A more patient man than Roland might well have been exasperated—a more wary man confounded by this discovery. He took the natural step—perhaps insisting on it too summarily—perhaps not allowing enough for the uncultured mind and lively passions of his wife—he ordered her instantly to prepare to accompany him from the place, and to abandon all communication with her kindred.

A vehement refusal ensued; but Roland was not a man to give up such a point, and at length a false submission, and a feigned repentance, soothed his resentment and obtained his pardon. They moved several miles from the place; but where they moved, there, some at least, and those the worst, of the baleful brood, stealthily followed. Whatever Ramouna's earlier love for Roland had been, it had evidently long ceased, in the thorough want of sympathy between them, and in that absence which, if it renews a strong affection, destroys an affection already weakened. But the mother and son adored each other with all the strength of their strong, wild natures. Even under ordinary circumstances, the father's influence over a boy yet in childhood is exerted in vain, if the mother lend herself to baffle it. And in this miserable position, what chance had the blunt, stern, honest Roland (separated from his son during the most ductile years of infancy) against the ascendancy of a mother who humored all the faults, and gratified all the wishes, of her darling?

In his despair, Roland let fall the threat that, if thus thwarted, it would become his duty to withdraw his son from the mother. This threat instantly hardened both hearts against him. The wife represented Roland to the boy as a tyrant, as an enemy—as one who had destroyed all the happiness they had before enjoyed in each other—as one whose severity showed that he hated his own child: and the boy believed her. In his own house a firm union was formed against Roland, and protected by the cunning which is the force of the weak against the strong.

In spite of all, Roland could never forget the tenderness with which the young nurse had watched over the wounded man, nor the love—genuine for the hour, though not drawn from the feelings which withstand the wear and tear of life—that lips so beautiful had pledged him in the by-gone days. These thoughts must have come perpetually between his feelings and his judgment, to embitter still more his position—to harass still more his heart. And if, by the strength of that sense of duty which made the force of his character, he could have strung himself to the fulfilment of the threat, humanity, at all events, compelled him to delay it—his wife promised to be again a mother. Blanche was born. How could he take the infant from the mother's breast, or abandon the daughter to the fatal influences from which only, by so violent an effort, he could free the son?

No wonder, poor Roland, that those deep furrows contracted thy bold front, and thy hair grew gray before its time!

Fortunately, perhaps, for all parties, Roland's wife died while Blanche was still an infant. She was taken ill of a fever—she died delirious, clasping her boy to her breast, and praying the saints to protect him from his cruel father

How often that deathbed haunted the son, and justified his belief that there was no parent's love in the heart which was now his sole shelter from the world, and the "pelting of its pitiless rain." Again I say, poor Roland! for I know that, in that harsh, unloving disrupture of such solemn ties, thy large, generous heart forgot its wrongs; again didst thou see tender eyes bending over the wounded stranger—again hear low murmurs breathe the warm weakness which the women of the south deem it no shame to own. And now did it all end in those ravings of hate, and in that glazing gaze of terror!

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRECEPTOR.

ROLAND removed to France, and fixed his abode in the environs of Paris. He placed Blanche at a convent in the immediate neighborhood, going to see her daily, and gave himself up to the education of his son. The boy was apt to learn, but to unlearn was here the arduous task—and for that task it would have needed either the passionless experience, the exquisite forbearance of a practised teacher, or the love, and confidence, and yielding heart of a believing pupil. Roland felt that he was not the man to be the teacher, and that his son's heart remained obstinately closed to him. He looked round, and found at the other side of Paris what seemed a suitable preceptor—a young Frenchman of some distinction in letters, more especially in science, with all a Frenchman's eloquence of talk, full of high-sounding sentiments that pleased the romantic enthusiasm of the Captain; so Roland, with sanguine hopes, confided his son to this man's care. The boy's natural quickness mastered readily all that pleased his taste; he learned to speak and write French with rare felicity and precision. His tenacious memory, and those flexile organs in which the talent for languages is placed, served, with the help of an English master, to revive his earlier knowledge of his father's tongue, and to enable him to speak it with fluent correctness—though there was always in his accent something which had struck me as strange; but not suspecting it to be foreign, I had thought it a theatrical affectation. He did not go far into science—little farther, perhaps, than a smattering of French mathematics, but he acquired a remarkable facility and promptitude in calculation. He devoured eagerly the light reading thrown in his way, and picked up thence that kind of knowledge which novels and plays afford, for good or evil, according as the novel or the play elevates the understanding and ennobles the passions, or merely corrupts the fancy, and lowers the standard of human nature. But of all that Roland desired him to be taught the son remained as ignorant as before. Among the other misfortunes of this ominous marriage, Roland's wife had possessed all the superstitions of a Roman Catholic Spaniard, and with these the boy had unconsciously intermingled doctrines far more dreary, imbibed from the dark paganism of the Gitános.

Roland had sought a Protestant for his son's tutor. The preceptor was nominally a Protestant—a biting derider of all superstitions indeed! He was such a Protestant as some defender of Voltaire's religion says the Great Wit would have been had he lived in a Protestant country. The Frenchman laughed the boy out of his superstitions, to leave behind them the sneering scepticism of the *Encyclopèdie*, without those redeeming ethics on which all sects of philosophy are agreed, but which, unhappily, it requires a philosopher to comprehend.

This preceptor was, doubtless, not aware of the mischief he was doing; and for the rest, he taught his pupil after his own system—a mild and plausible one, very much like the system we at home are recommended to adopt—"Teach the understanding, all else will follow;" "Learn to read *something*, and it will all come right;" "Follow the bias of the pupil's mind; thus you develop genius, not thwart it." Mind, Understanding, Genius, — fine things! But, to educate the whole man, you must educate something more than these. Not for want of mind, understanding, genius, have Borgias and Neros left their names as monuments of horror to mankind. Where, in all this teaching, was one lesson to warm the heart and guide the soul?

Oh, mother mine! that the boy had stood by thy knee, and heard from thy lips, why life was given us, in what life shall end, and how

heaven stands open to us night and day! Oh, father mine! that thou hadst been his preceptor, not in book-learning, but the heart's simple wisdom! Oh that he had learned from thee, in parables closed with practice, the happiness of self-sacrifice, and how "good deeds should repair the bad!"

It was the misfortune of this boy, with his daring and his beauty, that there was in his exterior and his manner that which attracted indulgent interest, and a sort of compassionate admiration. The Frenchman liked him—believed his story—thought him ill-treated by that hard-visaged English soldier. All English people were so disagreeable, particularly English soldiers; and the Captain once mortally offended the Frenchman by calling Vilainton *un grand homme*, and denying, with brutal indignation, that the English had poisoned Napoleon! So, instead of teaching the son to love and revere his father, the Frenchman shrugged his shoulders when the boy broke into some unfilial complaint, and at most said, "*Mais, cher enfant, ton père est Anglais,—c'est tout dire.*" Meanwhile, as the child sprang rapidly into precocious youth, he was permitted a liberty in his hours of leisure, of which he availed himself with all the zest of his earlier habits and adventurous temper. He formed acquaintances among the loose young haunters of cafés and spendthrifts of that capital—the wits! He became an excellent swordsman and pistol-shot—adroit in all games in which skill helps fortune. He learned betimes to furnish himself with money, by the cards and the billiard-balls.

But, delighted with the easy home he had obtained, he took care to school his features, and smooth his manner in his father's visits—to make the most of what he had learned of less ignoble knowledge, and, with his characteristic imitativeness, to cite the finest sentiments he had found in his plays and novels. What father is not credulous? Roland believed, and wept tears of joy. And now he thought the time was come to take back the boy—to return with a worthy heir to the old Tower. He thanked and blessed the tutor—he took the son. But, under pretence that he had yet some things to master, whether in book knowledge or manly accompliments, the youth begged his father, at all events, not yet to return to England—to let him attend his tutor daily for some months. Roland consented, moved from his old quarters, and took a lodging for both in the same surburb as that in which the teacher resided. But soon, when they were under one roof, the boy's habitual tastes, and his repugnance to all paternal authority, were betrayed. To do my unhappy cousin justice (such as that justice is), though he had the cunning for a short disguise, he had not the hypocrisy to maintain systematic deceit. He could play a part for a while, from an exulting joy in his own address; but he could not wear a mask with the patience of cold-blooded dissimulation. Why enter into painful details, so easily divined by the intelligent reader? The faults of the son were precisely those to which Roland would be least indulgent. To the ordinary scrapes of high-spirited boyhood, no father, I am sure, would have been more lenient; but to anything that seemed low, petty—that grated on him as a gentleman and soldier—there, not for worlds would I have braved the darkness of his frown, and the woe that spoke like scorn in his voice. And when, after all warning and prohibition were in vain, Roland found his son, in the middle of the night, in a resort of gamblers and sharpers, carrying all before him with his cue, in the full flush of triumph, and a great heap of five-franc pieces before him, you may conceive with what wrath the proud, hasty, passionate man drove out, cane in hand, the obscene associates, flinging after them the son's ill-gotten gains; and with what resentful humiliation the son was compelled to follow the father home. Then Roland took the boy to England, but not to the old Tower; that hearth of his ancestors was still too sacred for the footsteps of the vagrant heir!

CHAPTER V.

THE HEARTH WITHOUT TRUST, AND THE WORLD WITHOUT A GUIDE.

And then, vainly grasping at every argument his blunt sense could suggest—then talked Roland much and grandly of the duties men owed—even if they threw off all love to their father—still to their father's name; and then his pride, always so lively, grew irritable and

harsh, and seemed, no doubt, to the perverted ears of the son, unlovely and unloving. And that pride, without serving one purpose of good, did yet more mischief; for the youth caught the disease, but in a wrong way. And he said to himself—

"Ho, then my father is a great man, with all these ancestors and big words! And he has lands and a castle—and yet how miserably we live, and how he stints me! But, if he has cause for pride in all these dead men, why, so have I. And are these lodgings, these appurtenances, fit for the 'gentleman' he says I am?"

Even in England, the gypsey blood broke out as before, and the youth found vagrant associates, Heaven knows how or where; and strange-looking forms, gaudily shabby, and disreputably smart, were seen lurking in the corner of the street, or peering in at the window, slinking off if they saw Roland—and Roland could not stoop to be a spy. And the son's heart grew harder and harder against his father, and his father's face now never smiled on him. Then bills came in, and duns knocked at the door. Bills and duns to a man who shrunk from the thought of a debt as an ermine from a spot on its fur! And the son's short answer to remonstrance was,—"Am I not a gentleman?—these are the things gentlemen require." Then perhaps Roland remembered the experiment of his French friend, and left his bureau unlocked, and said, "Ruin me if you will, but no debts. There is money in those drawers—they are unlocked." That trust would for ever have cured of extravagance a youth with a high and delicate sense of honor: the pupil of the Gitanos did not understand the trust; he thought it conveyed a natural, though ungracious permission to take out what he wanted—and he took! To Roland this seemed a theft, and a theft of the coarsest kind: but when he so said, the son started indignant, and saw in that which had been so touching an appeal to his honor, but a trap to decoy him into disgrace. In short, neither could understand the other. Roland forbade his son to stir from the house; and the young man the same night let himself out, and stole forth into the wide world, to enjoy or defy it in his own wild way.

It would be tedious to follow him through his various adventures and experiments on fortune (even if I knew them all, which I do not). And now, putting altogether aside his right name, which he had voluntarily abandoned, and not embarrassing the reader with the earlier aliases assumed, I shall give to my unfortunate kinsman the name by which I first knew him, and continue to do so until—heaven grant the time may come!—having first redeemed, he may reclaim, his own. It was in joining a set of strolling players that Vivian became acquainted with Peacock; and that worthy, who had many strings to his bow, soon grew aware of Vivian's extraordinary skill with the cue, and saw therein a better mode of making their joint fortunes than the boards of an itinerant Thespis furnished to either. Vivian listened to him, and it was while their intimacy was most fresh that I met them on the high-road. That chance meeting produced (if I may be allowed to believe his assurance) a strong, and, for the moment, a salutary effect upon Vivian. The comparative innocence and freshness of a boy's mind were new to him; the elastic healthful spirts with which those gifts were accompanied startled him, by the contrast to his owned forced gaiety and secret gloom. And this boy was his own cousin!

Coming afterwards to London, he adventured inquiry at the hotel in the Strand at which I had given my address; learned where we were; and, passing one night into the street, saw my uncle at the window—to recognize and to fly from him. Having then some money at his disposal, he broke off abruptly from the set in which he had been thrown. He had resolved to return to France—he would try for a more respectable mode of existence. He had not found happiness in that liberty he had won, nor room for the ambition that began to gnaw him, in those pursuits from which his father had vainly warned him. His most reputable friend was his old tutor; he would go to him. He went; but the tutor was now married, and was himself a father, and that made a wonderful alteration in his practical ethics. It was no longer moral to aid the son in rebellion to his father. Vivian evinced his usual sarcastic haughtiness at the reception he met, and was requested civilly to leave the house. Then again he flung himself on his wits at Paris. But there were plenty of wits there sharper than his own. He got into some quarrel with the police—not, indeed, for any

dishonest practices of his own, but from an unwary acquaintance with others less scrupulous, and deemed it prudent to quit France. Thus had I met him again, forlorn and ragged, in the streets of London.

Meanwhile Roland, after the first vain search, had yielded to the indignation and disgust that had long rankled within him. His son had thrown off his authority, because it preserved him from dishonor. His ideas of discipline were stern, and patience had been well-nigh crushed out of his heart. He thought he could bear to resign his son to his fate—to disown him, and to say, "I have no more a son." It was in this mood that he had first visited our house. But when, on that memorable night in which he had narrated to his thrilling listeners the dark tale of a fellow-sufferer's woe and crime—betraying in the tale, to my father's quick sympathy, his own sorrow and passion—it did not need much of his gentler brother's subtle art to learn or guess the whole, nor much of Austin's mild persuasion to convince Roland that he had not yet exhausted all efforts to track the wanderer and reclaim the erring child. Then he had gone to London—then he had sought every spot which the outcast would probably haunt—then had he saved and pinched from his own necessities to have wherewithal to enter theatres and gaming-houses, and fee the agencies of police; then had he seen the form for which he had watched and pined, in the street below his window, and cried, in a joyous delusion, "He repents!" One day a letter reached my uncle, through his banker's, from the French tutor (who knew of no other means of tracing Roland but through the house by which his salary had been paid), informing him of his son's visit. Roland started instantly for Paris. Arriving there, he could only learn of his son through the police, and from them only learn that he had been seen in the company of accomplished swindlers, who were already in the hands of justice; but that the youth himself, whom there was nothing to criminate, had been suffered to quit Paris, and had taken, it was supposed, the road to England. Then, at last, the poor Captain's stout heart gave way. His son the companion of swindlers!—could he be sure that he was not their accomplice? If not yet, how small the step between companionship and participation! He took the child left him still from the convent, returned to England, and arrived there to be seized with fever and delirium—apparently on the same day (or a day before that on which) the son had dropped, shelterless and penniless, on the stones of London.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ATTEMPT TO BUILD A TEMPLE TO FORTUNE OUT OF THE RUINS OF HOME.

"But," said Vivian, pursuing his tale, "but when you came to my aid, not knowing me—when you relieved me—when from your own lips, for the first time, I heard words that praised me, and for qualities that implied I might yet be 'worth much'—Ah! (he added mournfully) I remember the very words—a new light broke upon me—struggling and dim, but light still. The ambition with which I had sought the truckling Frenchman revived, and took worthier and more definite form. I would lift myself above the mire, make a name, rise in life!"

Vivian's head drooped, but he raised it quickly, and laughed, his low, mocking laugh. What follows of this tale may be told succinctly. Retaining his bitter feelings towards his father, he resolved to continue his incognito—he gave himself a name likely to mislead conjecture, if I conversed of him to my family, since he knew that Roland was aware that a Colonel Vivian had been afflicted by a runaway son—and, indeed, the talk upon that subject had first put the notion of flight into his own head. He caught at the idea of becoming known to Trevanion; but he saw reasons to forbid his being indebted to me for the introduction—to forbid my knowing where he was: sooner or later that knowledge could scarcely fail to end in the discovery of his real name. Fortunately, as he deemed, for the plans he began to meditate, we were all leaving London—he should have the stage to himself. And then boldly he resolved upon what he regarded as the master-scheme of life—viz., to obtain a small pecuniary independence, and to emancipate himself formally and entirely from his father's control. Aware of poor Roland's chivalrous reverence for his name, firmly persuaded that Roland had no love for the son, but only the

dread that the son might disgrace him, he determined to avail himself of his father's prejudices in order to effect his purpose.

He wrote a short letter to Roland (that letter which had given the poor man so sanguine a joy—that letter after reading which he had said to Blanche, "Pray for me"), stating simply that he wished to see his father; and naming a tavern in the City for the meeting.

The interview took place. And when Roland, love and forgiveness in his heart,—but (who shall blame him?) dignity on his brow and rebuke in his eye—approached, ready at a word to fling himself on the boy's breast, Vivian, seeing only the outer signs, and interpreting them by his own sentiments—recoiled, folded his arms on his bosom, and said coldly, "Spare me reproach, sir—it is unavailing. I seek you only to propose that you shall save your name and resign your son."

Then, intent perhaps but to gain his object, the unhappy youth declared his fixed determination never to live with his father, never to acquiesce in his authority, resolutely to pursue his own career, whatever that career might be, explaining none of the circumstances that appeared most in his disfavor—rather, perhaps, thinking that, the worse his father judged of him, the more chance he had to achieve his purpose. "All I ask of you," he said, "is this: Give me the least you can afford to preserve me from the temptation to rob, or the necessity to starve; and I, in my turn, promise never to molest you in life—never to degrade you in my death; whatever my misdeeds, they will never reflect on yourself, for you shall never recognize the misdoer! The name you prize so highly shall be spared." Sickened and revolted, Roland attempted no argument—there was that in the son's cold manner which shut out hope, and against which his pride rose indignant.

A meeker man might have remonstrated, implored, and wept—that was not in Roland's nature. He had but the choice of three evils, to say to his son: "Fool, I command thee to follow me!" or say, "Wretch, since thou wouldst cast me off as a stranger, as a stranger I say to thee—Go, starve or rob as thou wilt!" or lastly, to bow his proud head, stunned by the blow, and say, "Thou refusest me the obedience of the son, thou demandest to be as the dead to me. I can control thee not from vice, I can guide thee not to virtue. Thou wouldst sell me the name I have inherited stainless, and have as stainless borne. Be it so!—Name thy price!"

And something like this last was the father's choice.

He listened and was long silent; and then he said slowly, "Pause before you decide."

"I have paused long—my decision is made! this is the last time we meet. I see before me now the way to fortune, fairly, honorably; you can aid me in it only in the way I have said. Reject me now, and the option may never come again to either!"

And then Roland said to himself, "I have spared and saved for this son; what care I for aught else than enough to live without debt, creep into a corner, and await the grave! And the more I can give, why, the better chance that he will abjure the vile associate and the desperate course." And so, out of his small income, Roland surrendered to the rebel child more than the half.

Vivian was not aware of his father's fortune—he did not suppose the sum of two hundred pounds a-year was an allowance so disproportioned to Roland's means—yet when it was named, even he was struck by the generosity of one to whom he himself had given the right to say, "I take thee at thy word; 'just enough not to starve!'"

But then that hateful cynicism which, caught from bad men and evil books, he called "knowledge of the world," made him think "it is not for me, it is only for his name;" and he said aloud, "I accept these terms, sir; here is the address of a solicitor with whom yours can settle them. Farewell for ever."

At these last words Roland started, and stretched out his arms vaguely like a blind man. But Vivian had already thrown open the window (the room was on the ground floor) and sprang upon the sill. "Farewell," he repeated: "tell the world I am dead."

He leapt into the street, and the father drew in the out-stretched arms, smote his heart, and said—"Well, then, my task in the world of man is over! I will back to the old ruin—the wreck to the wrecks—and the sight of tombs I have at least rescued from dishonor shall comfort me for all!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESULTS—PERVERTED AMBITION—SELFISH PASSION—THE INTELLECT DISTORTED BY THE CROOKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

VIVIAN'S schemes thus prospered. He had an income that permitted him the outward appearances of a gentleman—an independence modest, indeed, but independence still. We were all gone from London. One letter to me with the postmark of the town near which Colonel Vivian lived, sufficed to confirm my belief in his parentage, and in his return to his friends. He then presented himself to Trevanion as the young man whose pen I had employed in the member's service; and knowing that I had never mentioned his name to Trevanion—for, without Vivian's permission, I should not, considering his apparent trust in me, have deemed myself authorized to do so—he took that of Gower, which he selected, haphazard, from an old Court Guide, as having the advantage—in common with most names borne by the higher nobility of England—of not being confined, as the ancient names of untitled gentlemen usually are, to the members of a single family. And when, with his wonted adaptability and suppleness, he had contrived to lay aside, or smooth over, whatever in his manners would be calculated to displease Trevanion, and had succeeded in exciting the interest which that generous statesman always conceived for ability, he owned, candidly, one day, in the presence of Lady Ellinor—for his experience had taught him the comparative ease with which the sympathy of woman is enlisted in anything that appeals to the imagination, or seems out of the ordinary beat of life—that he had reasons for concealing his connections for the present—that he had cause to believe I suspected what they were, and, from mistaken regard for his welfare, might acquaint his relations with his whereabout. He therefore begged Trevanion, if the latter had occasion to write to me, not to mention him. This promise Trevanion gave, though reluctantly; for the confidence volunteered to him seemed to exact the promise; but as he detested mystery of all kinds, the avowal might have been fatal to any farther acquaintance; and under auspices so doubtful, there would have been no chance of his obtaining that intimacy in Trevanion's house which he desired to establish, but for an accident which at once opened that house to him almost as a home.

Vivian had always treasured a lock of his mother's hair, cut off on her deathbed; and when he was at his French tutor's, his first pocket-money had been devoted to the purchase of a locket, on which he had caused to be inscribed his own name and his mother's. Through all his wanderings he had worn this relic: and in the direst pangs of want, no hunger had been keen enough to induce him to part with it. Now, one morning the ribbon that suspended the locket gave way, and his eye resting on the names inscribed on the gold, he thought, in his own vague sense of right, imperfect as it was, that his compact with his father obliged him to have the names erased. He took it to a jeweller in Piccadilly for that purpose, and gave the requisite order, not taking notice of a lady in the further part of the shop. The locket was still on the counter after Vivian had left, when the lady coming forward observed it, and saw the names on the surface. She had been struck by the peculiar tone of the voice, which she had heard before; and that very day Mr. Gower received a note from Lady Ellinor Trevanion, requesting to see him. Much wondering, he went. Presenting him with the locket, she said smiling, "There is only one gentleman in the world who calls himself *De* Caxton, unless it be his son. Ah! I see now why you wished to conceal yourself from my friend Pisistratus. But how is this? can you have any difference with your father? Confide in me, or it is my duty to write to him."

Even Vivian's powers of dissimulation abandoned him, thus taken by surprise. He saw no alternative but to trust Lady Ellinor with his secret, and implore her to respect it. And then he spoke bitterly of his father's dislike to him, and his own resolution to prove the injustice of that dislike by the position he would himself establish in the world. At present, his father believed him dead, and perhaps was not ill-pleased to think so. He would not dispel that belief, till he could redeem any boyish errors, and force his family to be proud to acknowledge him.

Though Lady Ellinor was slow to believe that Roland could dislike his son, she could yet

readily believe that he was harsh and choleric, with a soldier's high notions of discipline: the young man's story moved her, his determination pleased her own high spirit; —always with a touch of romance in her, and always sympathizing with each desire of ambition, she entered into Vivian's aspirations with an alacrity that surprised himself. She was charmed with the idea of ministering to the son's fortunes, and ultimately reconciling him to the father,—through her own agency;—it would atone for any fault of which Roland could accuse herself in the old time.

She undertook to impart the secret to Trevanion, for she would have no secrets from him, and to secure his acquiescence in its concealment from all others.

And here I must a little digress from the chronological course of my explanatory narrative, to inform the reader that, when Lady Ellinor had her interview with Roland, she had been repelled by the sternness of his manner from divulging Vivian's secret. But on her first attempt to sound or conciliate him, she had begun with some eulogies on Trevanion's new friend and assistant, Mr. Gower, and had awakened Roland's suspicions of that person's identity with his son—suspicions which had given him a terrible interest in our joint deliverance of Miss Trevanion. But so heroically had the poor soldier sought to resist his own fears, that on the way he shrank to put to me the questions that might paralyze the energies which, whatever the answer, were then so much needed. "For," said he to my father, "I felt the blood surging to my temples; and if I had said to Pisistratus, 'Describe this man,' and by his description I had recognized my son, and dreaded lest I might be too late to arrest him from so treacherous a crime, my brain would have given way;—and so I did not dare!"

I return to the thread of my story. From the time that Vivian confided in Lady Ellinor, the way was cleared to his most ambitious hopes; and though his acquisitions were not sufficiently scholastic and various to permit Trevanion to select him as a secretary, yet, short of sleeping at the house, he was little less intimate there than I had been.

Among Vivian's schemes of advancement, that of winning the hand and heart of the great heiress had not been one of the least sanguine. This hope was annulled when, not long after his intimacy at her father's house, she became engaged to young Lord Castleton. But he could not see Miss Trevanion with impunity —(alas! who, with a heart yet free, could be insensible to attractions so winning?) He permitted the love—such love as his wild, half-educated, half-savage nature acknowledged—to creep into his soul—to master it; but he felt no hope, cherished no scheme while the young lord lived. With the death of her betrothed, Fanny was free; then he began to hope—not yet to scheme. Accidentally he encountered Peacock —partly from the levity that accompanied a false good nature that was constitutional with him, partly from a vague idea that the man might be useful, Vivian established his quondam associate in the service of Trevanion. Peacock soon gained the secret of Vivian's love for Fanny, and, dazzled by the advantages that a marriage with Miss Trevanion would confer on his patron, and might reflect on himself, and delighted at an occasion to exercise his dramatic accomplishments on the stage of real life, he soon practised the lesson that the theatres had taught him—viz. to make a sub-intrigue between maid and valet, serve the schemes and insure the success of the lover. If Vivian had some opportunities to imply his admiration, Miss Trevanion gave him none to plead his cause. But the softness of her nature, and that graceful kindness which surrounded her like an atmosphere, emanating unconsciously from a girl's harmless desire to please, tended to deceive him. His own personal gifts were so rare, and, in his wandering life, the effect they had produced had so increased his reliance on them, that he thought he wanted but the fair opportunity to woo in order to win. In this state of mental intoxication, Trevanion having provided for his Scotch secretary, took him to Lord N——'s. His hostess was one of those middle aged ladies of fashion, who like to patronize and bring forward young men, accepting gratitude for condescension, as a homage to beauty. She was struck by Vivian's exterior, and that "picturesque" in look and in manner which belonged to him. Naturally garrulous and indiscreet, she was unreserved to a pupil whom she conceived the whim to make "*au fait* to society." Thus she talked to him among other topics in fashion, of Miss Trevanion, and expressed her belief

that the present Lord Castleton had always admired her; but it was only on his accession to the marquisate that he had made up his mind to marry, or, from his knowledge of Lady Ellinor's ambition, thought that the Marquis of Castleton might achieve the prize which would have been refused to Sir Sedley Beaudesert. Then, to corroborate the predictions she hazarded, she repeated, perhaps with exaggeration, some passages from Lord Castleton's replies to her own suggestions on the subject. Vivian's alarm became fatally excited; unregulated passions easily obscured a reason so long perverted, and a conscience so habitually dulled. There is an instinct in all intense affection (whether it be corrupt or pure) that usually makes its jealousy prophetic. Thus, from the first, out of all the brilliant idlers round Fanny Trevanion, my jealousy had pre-eminently fastened on Sir Sedley Beaudesert, though, to all seeming, without a cause. From the same instinct, Vivian had conceived the same vague jealousy—a jealousy, in his instance, coupled with a deep dislike to his supposed rival, who had wounded his self-love. For the Marquis, though to be haughty or ill-bred was impossible to the blandness of his nature, had never shown to Vivian the genial courtesies he had lavished upon me, and kept politely aloof from his acquaintance—while Vivian's personal vanity had been wounded by that drawing-room effect which the proverbial winner of all hearts produced without an effort—an effect that threw into the shade the youth and the beauty (more striking but infinitely less prepossessing) of the adventurous rival. Thus animosity to Lord Castleton conspired with Vivian's passion for Fanny, to rouse all that was worst by nature and by rearing, in this audacious and turbulent spirit.

His confidant, Peacock, suggested, from his stage experience, the outlines of a plot, to which Vivian's astuter intellect instantly gave tangibility and coloring. Peacock had already found Miss Trevanion's waiting-woman ripe for any measure that might secure himself as her husband, and a provision for life as a reward. Two or three letters between them settled the preliminary engagements. A friend of the ex-comedian's had lately taken an inn on the north road, aud might be relied upon. At that inn it was settled that Vivian should meet Miss Trevanion, whom Peacock, by the aid of the abigail, engaged to lure there. The sole difficulty that then remained would, to most men, have seemed the greatest—viz., the consent of Miss Trevanion to a Scotch marriage. But Vivian hoped all things from his own eloquence, art, and passion; and by an inconsistency, however strange, still not unnatural in the twists of so crooked an intellect, he thought that, by insisting on the intention of her parents to sacrifice her youth to the very man of whose attractions he was most jealous—by the picture of disparity of years, by the caricature of his rival's foibles and frivolities, by the commonplaces of "beauty bartered for ambition," etc., he might enlist her fears of the alternative on the side of the choice urged upon her. The plan proceeded, the time came: Peacock pretended the excuse of a sick relation to leave Trevanion; and Vivian a day before, on pretence of visiting the picturesque scenes in the neighborhood, obtained leave of absence. Thus the plot went on to its catastrophe.

"And I need not ask," said I, trying in vain to conceal my indignation, "how Miss Trevanion received your monstrous proposition!"

Vivian's pale cheek grew paler, but he made no reply.

"And if we had not arrived, what would you have done? Oh, dare you look into the gulf of infamy you have escaped!"

"I cannot, and I will not bear this!" exclaimed Vivian, starting up. "I have laid my heart bare before you, and it is ungenerous and unmanly thus to press upon its wounds. You can moralize, you can speak coldly—but—I—I loved!"

"And do you think," I burst forth,—"do you think that I did not love too!—love longer than you have done; better than you have done; gone through sharper struggles, darker days, more sleepless nights than you,—and yet—"

Vivian caught hold of me.

"Hush!" he cried; "is this indeed true! I thought you might have had some faint and fleeting fancy for Miss Trevanion, but that you curbed and conquered it at once. Oh no! it was impossible to have loved really, and to have surrendered all chance as you did!—have left the house, have fled from her presence! No—no! that was not love!"

"It *was* love! and I pray Heaven to grant

that, one day, you may know how little your affection sprang from those feelings which make true love sublime as honor, and meek as is religion! Oh! cousin, cousin—with those rare gifts, what you might have been! what, if you will pass through repentance, and cling to atonement—what, I dare hope, you may yet be! Talk not now of your love; I talk not of mine! Love is a thing gone from the lives of both. Go back to earlier thoughts, to heavier wrongs!—your father!—that noble heart which you have so wantonly lacerated, which you have so little comprehended!"

Then with all the warmth of emotion I hurried on—showed him the true nature of honor and of Roland (for the names were one!)—showed him the watch, the hope, the manly anguish I had witnessed, and wept—I, not his son—to see; showed him the poverty and privation to which the father, even at the last, had condemned himself, so that the son might have no excuse for the sins that Want whispers to the weak. This, and much more, and I suppose with the pathos that belongs to all earnestness, I enforced, sentence after sentence—yielding to no interruption, overmasteaing all dissent! driving in the truth, nail after nail, as it were, into the obdurate heart, that I constrained and grappled to. And at last, the dark, bitter, cynical nature gave way, and the young man fell sobbing at my feet, and cried aloud, "Spare me, spare me! I see it all now! Wretch that I have been!"

CHAPTER VIII.

On leaving Vivian I did not presume to promise him Roland's immediate pardon. I did not urge him to attempt to see his father. I felt the time was not come for either pardon or interview. I contented myself with the victory I had already gained. I judged it right that thought, solitude, and suffering should imprint more deeply the lesson, and prepare the way to the steadfast resolution of reform. I left him seated by the stream, and with the promise to inform him at the small hostelry, where he took up his lodging, how Roland struggled through his illness.

On returning to the inn, I was uneasy to see how long a time had elasped since I had left my uncle. But on coming into his room, to my surprise and relief, I found him up and dressed, and with a serene, though fatigued, expression of countenance. He asked me no questions where I had been—perhaps from sympathy with my feelings in parting with Miss Trevanion—perhaps from conjecture that the indulgence of those feelings had not wholly engrossed my time.

But he said simply, "I think I understood from you that you had sent for Austin—is it so?"

"Yes, sir; but I named * * *, as the nearest point to the Tower, for the place of meeting."

"Then let us go hence forthwith—nay, I shall be better for the change. And here, there must be curiosity, conjecture—torture!"—said he, locking his hands tightly together: "order the horses at once!"

I left the room accordingly; and while they were getting ready the horses, I ran to the place where I had left Vivian. He was still there, in the same attitude, covering his face with his hands, as if to shut out the sun. I told him hastily of Roland's improvement, of our approaching departure, and asked him an address in London at which I could find him. He gave me as his direction the same lodging at which I had so often visited him. "If there be no vacancy there for me," said he, "I shall leave word where I am to be found. But I would gladly be where I was before—" He did not finish the sentence. I pressed his hand and left him.

CHAPTER IX.

Some days have elapsed: we are in London, my father with us; and Roland has permitted Austin to tell me his tale, and received through Austin all that Vivian's narrative to me suggested, whether in extenuation of the past, or in hope of redemption in the future. And Austin has inexpressibly soothed his brother. And Roland's ordinary roughness has gone, and his looks are meek, and his voice low. But he talks little, and smiles never. He asks me no questions; does not to *me* name his son, nor recur to the voyage to Australia, nor ask "Why it is put off;" nor interest himself as before in preparations for it—he has no heart for anything.

The voyage *is* put off till the next vessel sails, and I have seen Vivian twice or thrice, and the result of the interviews has disappointed and depressed me. It seems to me that much of the previous effect I had produced is already obliterated. At the very sight of the great Babel—the evidence of the ease, the luxury, the wealth, the pomp;—the strife, the penury, the famine, and the rags, which the focus of civilization, in the disparities of old societies, inevitably gathers together—the fierce combative disposition seemed to awaken again; the perverted ambition, the hostility to the world; the wrath, the scorn; the war with man, and the rebellious murmur against Heaven. There was still the one redeeming point of repentance for his wrongs to his father—his heart was still softened there; and, attendant on that softness, I hailed a principle more like that of honor than I had yet recognized in Vivian. He cancelled the agreement which had assured him of a provision at the cost of his father's comforts. "At least, there," he said, "I will injure him no more!"

But while, on this point, repentance seemed genuine, it was not so with regard to his conduct towards Miss Trevanion. His gypsy nurture, his loose associates, his extravagant French romances, his theatrical mode of looking upon love intrigues and stage plots, seemed all to rise between his intelligence and the due sense of the fraud and treachery he had practiced. He seemed to feel more shame at the exposure than at the guilt; more despair at the failure of success than gratitude at escape from crime. In a word, the nature of a whole life was not to be remodelled at once—at least by an artificer so unskilled as I.

After one of these interviews, I stole into the room where Austin sat with Roland, and, watching a seasonable moment when Roland, shaking off a reverie, opened his Bible, and sat down to it, with each muscle in his face set, as I had seen it before, into iron resolution, I beckoned my father from the room.

PISISTRATUS.—I have again seen my cousin. I cannot make the way I wish. My dear father, *you* must see him.

MR. CAXTON.—I?—yes, assuredly, if I can be of any service. But will he listen to me?

PISISTRATUS.—I think so. A young man will often respect in his elder, what he will resent as a presumption in his contemporary.

MR. CAXTON.—It may be so: (then more thoughtfully), but you describe this strange boy's mind as a wreck!—in what part of the mouldering timbers can I fix the grappling-hook? Here, it seems that most of the supports on which we can best rely, when we would save another, fail us. Religion, honor, the associations of childhood, the bonds of home, filial obedience—even the intelligence of self-interest, in the philosophical sense of the word. And I, too!—a mere book-man! My dear son!—I despair!

PISISTRATUS.—No, you do not despair—no, you must succeed; for, if you do not, what is to become of Uncle Roland? Do you not see his heart is fast breaking?

MR. CAXTON.—Get me my hat; I will go. I will save this Ishmael—I will not leave him till he is saved!

PISISTRATUS (some minutes after, as they are walking towards Vivian's lodging).—You ask me what support you are to cling to. A strong and a good one, sir.

MR. CAXTON.—Ah! what is that?

PISISTRATUS.—Affection! there is a nature capable of strong affection at the core of this wild heart! He could love his mother; tears gush to his eyes at her name—he would have starved rather than part with the memorial of that love. It was his belief in his father's indifference, or dislike, that hardened and embruted him—it is only when he hears how that father loved him, that I now melt his pride and curb his passions. You have affection to deal with!—do your despair now?

My father turned on me those eyes so inexpressibly benign and mild, and replied softly, "No!"

We reached the house; and my father said, as we knocked at the door, "If he is at home, leave me. This is a hard study to which you have set me; I must work at it alone."

Vivian was at home, and the door closed on his visitor. My father stayed some hours.

On returning home, to my great surprise I found Trevanion with my uncle. He had found us out—no easy matter, I should think. But a good impulse in Trevanion was not of that feeble kind which turns home at the sight of a difficulty. He had come to London on purpose to see and to thank us.

I did not think there had been so much of delicacy—of what I may call the "beauty of

kindness"—in a man whom incessant business had rendered ordinarily blunt and abrupt. I hardly recognized the impatient Trevanion in the soothing, tender, subtle respect that rather implied than spoke gratitude, and sought to insinuate what he owed to the unhappy father, without touching on his wrongs from the son. But of this kindness—which showed how Trevanion's high nature of gentleman raised him aloof from that coarseness of thought which those absorbed wholly in practical affairs often contract—of this kindness, so noble and so touching, Roland seemed scarcely aware. He sat by the embers of the neglected fire, his hands grasping the arms of his elbow-chair, his head drooping on his bosom; and only by a deep hectic flush on his dark cheek could you have seen that he distinguished between an ordinary visitor and the man whose child he had helped to save. This minister of state—this high member of the elect, at whose gift are places, peerages, gold sticks, and ribbons—has nothing at his command for the bruised spirit of the half-pay soldier. Before that poverty, that grief, and that pride, the King's Counsellor was powerless. Only when Trevanion rose to depart, something like a sense of the soothing intention which the visit implied seemed to rouse the repose of the old man, and to break the ice at its surface; for he followed Trevanion to the door, took both his hands, pressed them, then turned away, and resumed his seat. Trevanion beckoned to me, and I followed him down stairs, and into a little parlor which was unoccupied.

After some remarks upon Roland, full of deep and considerate feeling, and one quick, hurried reference to the son—to the effect that his guilty attempt would never be known by the world—Trevanion then addressed himself to me with a warmth and urgency that took me by surprise. "After what has passed," he exclaimed, "I cannot suffer you to leave England thus. Let me not feel with you, as with your uncle, that there is nothing by which I can repay—no, I will not so put it—stay and serve your country at home: it is my prayer—it is Ellinor's. Out of all at my disposal, it will go hard but what I shall find something to suit you." And then, hurrying on, Trevanion spoke flatteringly of my pretensions, in right of birth and capabilities, to honorable employment, and placed before me a picture of public life—its prizes and distinctions—which, for the moment at least, made my heart beat loud and my breath come quick. But still, even then, I felt (was it an unreasonable pride?) that there was something that jarred, something that humbled, in the thought of holding all my fortunes as a dependency on the father of the woman I loved, but might not aspire to;—something even of personal degradation in the mere feeling that I was thus to be repaid for a service, and recompensed for a loss. But these were not reasons I could advance; and, indeed, so for the time did Trevanion's generosity and eloquence overpower me, that I could only falter out my thanks, and my promise that I would consider and let him know.

With that promise he was forced to content himself; he told me to direct to him at his favorite country seat, whither he was going that day, and so left me. I looked round the humble parlor of the mean lodging-house, and Trevanion's words came again before me like a flash of golden light. I stole into the open air, and wandered through the crowded streets, agitated and disturbed.

CHAPTER X.

SEVERAL days elapsed—and of each day my father spent a considerable part at Vivian's lodgings. But he maintained a reserve as to his success, begged me not to question him, and to refrain also for the present from visiting my cousin. My uncle guessed or knew his brother's mission; for I observed that, wherever Austin went noiseless away, his eye brightened, and the color rose in a hectic flush to his cheek. At last my father came to me one morning, his carpet-bag in his hand, and said, "I am going away for a week or two. Keep Roland company till I return."

"Going with *him*?"

"With him."

"That is a good sign."

"I hope so: that is all I can say now."

The week had not quite passed when I received from my father the letter I am about to place before the reader, and you may judge how earnestly his soul must have been in the task it had volunteered, if you observe how

little, comparatively speaking, the letter contains of the subtleties and pedantries (may the last word be pardoned, for it is scarcely a just one) which ordinarily left my father, a scholar even in the midst of his emotions. He seemed here to have abandoned his books, to have put the human heart before the eyes of his pupil, and said, "Read and *un*-learn!"

To Pisistratus Caxton.

"My dear Son,—It were needless to tell you all the earlier difficulties I have had to encounter with my charge, nor to repeat all the means which, acting on your suggestion (a correct one), I have employed to arouse feelings long dormant and confused, and allay others, long prematurely active and terribly distinct. The evil was simply this: here was the intelligence of a man in all that is evil—and the ignorance of an infant in all that is good. In matters merely worldly, what wonderful acumen! in the plain principles of right and wrong, what gross and stolid obtuseness! At one time, I am straining all my poor wit to grapple in an encounter on the knottiest mysteries of social life; at another, I am guiding reluctant fingers over the horn-book of the most obvious morals. Here hieroglyphics, and there pot-hook! But as long as there is affection in a man, why, there is Nature to begin with! To get rid of all the rubbish laid upon her, clear back the way to that Nature, and start afresh—that is one's only chance.

"Well, by degrees I won my way, waiting patiently till the bosom, pleased with the relief, disgorged itself of all 'its perilous stuff,'—not chiding—not even remonstrating, seeming almost to sympathize, till I got him, Socratically, to disprove himself. When I saw that he no longer feared me—that my company had become a relief to him—I proposed an excursion, and did not tell him whither.

"Avoiding as much as possible the main north road (for I did not wish, as you may suppose, to set fire to a train of associations that might blow us up to the dog-star), and, where that avoidance was not possible, travelling by night, I got him into the neighborhood of the old tower. I would not admit him under its roof. But you know the little inn, three miles off, near the trout stream?—we made our abode there.

"Well, I have taken him into the village, preserving his incognito. I have entered with him into cottages, and turned the talk upon Roland. You know how your uncle is adored; you know what anecdotes of his bold, warm-hearted youth once, and now of his kind and charitable age, would spring up from the garrulous lips of gratitude! I made him see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, how all who knew Roland loved and honored him—except his son. Then I took him round the ruins—(still not suffering him to enter the house), for those ruins are the key to Roland's character—seeing them, one sees the pathos in his poor foible of family pride. There, you distinguish it from the insolent boasts of the prosperous, and feel that it is little more than the pious reverence to the dead—'the tender culture of the tomb.' We sat down on heaps of mouldering stone, and it was there that I explained to him what Roland was in youth, and what he had dreamed that a son would be to him. I showed him the graves of his ancestors, and explained to him why they were sacred in Roland's eyes! I had gained a great way, when he longed to enter the home that should have been his; and I could make him pause of his own accord, and say, 'No, I must first be worthy of it.' Then you would have smiled—sly satirist that you are—to have heard me impressing upon this acute, sharp-witted youth, all that we plain folk understand by the name of home—its perfect trust and truth, its simple holiness, its exquisite happiness—being to the world what conscience is to the human mind. And after that, I brought in his sister, whom till then he had scarcely named—for whom he scarcely seemed to care—brought her in to aid the father, and endear the home. 'And you know,' said I, 'that if Roland were to die, it would be a brother's duty to supply his place; to shield her innocence—to protect her name! A good name is something, then. Your father was not so wrong to prize it. You would like yours to be that which your sister would be proud to own!'

"While we were talking, Blanche suddenly came to the spot, and rushed to my arms. She looked on him as a stranger; but I saw his knees tremble. And then she was about to put her hand in his—but I drew her back. Was I cruel? He thought so. But when I dismissed her, I replied to his reproach, 'Your sister is a part of Home. If you think yourself worthy of either, go and claim both; I will not object.'—'She has my mother's eyes,' said he, and walked away. I left him to muse amidst the ruins, while I went in to see your poor mother, and relieve her fears about Roland, and make her understand why I could not yet return *home*.

"This brief sight of his sister has sunk deep into him. But I now approach what seems to me the great difficulty of the whole. He is fully anxious to redeem his name—to regain his home. So far so well. But he cannot yet see ambition, except with hard, worldly eyes. He still fancies that all he has to do is to get money and power, and some of those empty prizes in the Great Lottery which we often win more easily by our sins than our virtues. (Here follows a long passage from Seneca, omitted as superfluous.) He does not yet even understand me—or, if he does, he fancies me a mere book-worm indeed, when I imply that he might be poor, and obscure, at the bottom of fortune's wheel, and yet be one we should be proud of! He supposes that, to redeem his name, he has only got to lacker it. Don't think me merely the fond father, when I add my hope that I shall use you to advantage here. I mean to talk to him to-morrow, as we return to London, of you, and of your ambition: you shall hear the result.

"At this moment (it is past mid-night), I hear his step in the room above me. The window-sash aloft opens—for the third time: would to heaven he could read the true astrology of the stars! There they are—bright, luminous, benignant. And I seeking to chain this wandering comet into the harmonies of heaven! Better task than that of astrologers, and astronomers to boot! Who among them can 'loosen the band of Orion?'—but who amongst us may not be permitted by God to have sway over the action and orbit of the human soul?

"Your ever affectionate father,

"A. C."

Two days after the receipt of this letter, came the following; and though I would fain

suppress those references to myself which must be ascribed to a father's partiality, yet it is so needful to retain them in connection with Vivian, that I have no choice but to leave the tender flatteries to the indulgence of the kind.

"My dear Son,—I was not too sanguine as to the effect that your simple story would produce upon your cousin. Without implying any contrast to his own conduct, I described that scene in which you threw yourself upon our sympathy, in the struggle between love and duty, and asked for our counsel and support; when Roland gave you his blunt advice to tell all to Trevanion; and when, amidst such sorrow as the heart in youth seems scarcely large enough to hold, you caught at truth impulsively, and the truth bore you safe from the shipwreck. I recounted your silent and manly struggles—your resolution not to suffer the egotism of passion to unfit you for the aims and ends of that spiritual probation which we call LIFE. I showed you as you were, still thoughtful for us, interested in our interests—smiling on us, that we might not guess that you wept in secret! Oh, my son—my son! do not think that, in those times, I did not feel and pray for you! And while he was melted by my own emotion, I turned from your love to your ambition. I made him see that you, too, had known the restlessness which belongs to young ardent natures; that you, too, had your dreams of fortune, and aspirations for success. But I painted that ambition in its true colors: it was not the desire of a selfish intellect, to be in yourself a somebody—a something—raised a step or two in the social ladder, for the pleasure of looking down on those at the foot, but the warmer yearning of a generous heart: your ambition was to repair your father's losses—minister to your father's very foible, in *his* idle desire of fame—supply to your uncle what he had lost in his natural heir—link your success to useful objects, your interests to those of your kind, your reward to the proud and grateful smiles of those you loved. That was thine ambition, O my tender Anachronism! And when, as I closed the sketch, I said, 'Pardon me: you know not what delight a father feels, when, while sending a son away from him into the world, he can speak and think thus of him! But this, you see, is not your kind of ambition. Let us talk of making money, and driving a coach-and-four through this villanous world,'—your cousin sank into a profound reverie; and when he woke from it, it was like the waking of the earth after a night in spring—the bare trees had put forth buds!

"And, some time after, he startled me by a prayer that I would permit him, with his father's consent, to accompany you to Australia. The only answer I have given him as yet, has been in the form of a question: 'Ask yourself if I ought? I cannot wish Pisistratus to be other than he is; and unless you agree with him in all his principles and objects, ought I to incur the risk that you should give him your knowledge of the world, and inoculate him with your ambition?' He was struck, and had the candor to attempt no reply.

"Now, Pisistratus, the doubt I expressed to him is the doubt I feel. For, indeed, it is only by home-truths, not refining arguments, that I can deal with this unscholastic Scythian, who, fresh from the Steppes, comes to puzzle me in the Portico.

"On the one hand, what is to become of him in the Old World? At his age, and with his energies, it would be impossible to cage him with us in the Cumberland ruins; weariness and discontent would undo all we could do. He has no resource in books—and, I fear, never will have! But to send him forth into one of the overcrowded professions—to place him amidst all those 'disparities of social life,' on the rough stones of which he is perpetually grinding his heart—turn him adrift amongst all the temptations to which he is most prone—this is a trial which, I fear, will be too sharp for a conversion so incomplete. In the New World, no doubt, his energies would find a safer field; and even the adventurous and desultory habits of his childhood might there be put to healthful account. Those complaints of the disparities of the civilized world find, I suspect, an easier, if a bluffer reply from the political economist than the Stoic philosopher. 'You don't like them, you find it hard to submit to them,' says the political economist; 'but they are the laws of a civilized state, and you can't alter them. Wiser men than you have tried to alter them, and never succeeded, though they turned the earth topsy-turvy! Very well; but the world is wide—go into a state that is not so civilized. The disparities of the Old World vanish amidst the New! Emigration is the reply of Nature to the rebellious cry against Art.' Thus would say the political economist; and, alas, even in your case, my son, I found no reply to the reasonings! I acknowledge, then, that Australia might open the best safety-valve to your cousin's discontent and desires; but I acknowledge also a counter-truth, which is this—'It is not permitted to an honest man to corrupt himself for the sake of others.' That is almost the only maxim of Jean Jacques to which I can cheerfully subscribe! Do you feel quite strong enough to resist all the influences which a companionship of this kind may subject you to—strong enough to bear his burthen as well as your own—strong enough, also—ay, and alert and vigilant enough—to prevent those influences harming the others, whom you have undertaken to guide, and whose lots are confided to you? Pause well, and consider maturely, for this must not depend upon a generous impulse. I think that your cousin would now pass under your charge with a sincere desire for reform; but between sincere desire and steadfast performance there is a long and dreary interval—even to the best of us. Were it not for Roland, and had I one grain less confidence in you, I could not entertain the thought of laying on your young shoulders so great a responsibility. But every new responsibility to an earnest nature is a new prop to virtue;—and all I now ask of you is—to remember that it *is* a solemn and serious charge, not to be undertaken without the most deliberate gauge and measure of the strength with which it is to be borne.

"In two days we shall be in London.—Yours, my Anachronism, anxiously and fondly,

"A. C."

I was in my own room while I read this letter, and I had just finished it when, as I looked up, I saw Roland standing opposite to me. "It is from Austin," said he; then he paused a moment, and added, in a tone that seemed quite humble, "May I see it?—and dare I?" I placed the letter in his hands, and retired a few paces, that he might not think

I watched his countenance while he read it. And I was only aware that he had come to the end by a heavy, anxious, but not disappointed sigh. Then I turned, and our eyes met, and there was something in Roland's look, inquiring—and, as it were, imploring. I interpreted it at once.

"Oh, yes, uncle," I said, smiling; "I have reflected, and I have no fear of the result. Before my father wrote, what he now suggests had become my secret wish. As for our other companions, their simple natures would defy all such sophistries as—but he is already half-cured of those. Let him come with me, and when he returns he shall be worthy of a place in your heart, beside his sister Blanche. I feel, I promise it—do not fear for me! Such a change will be a talisman to myself. I will shun every error that I might otherwise commit, so that he may have no example to entice him to err."

I know that in youth, and the superstition of first love, we are credulously inclined to believe that love, and the possession of the beloved, are the only happiness. But when my uncle folded me in his arms, and called me the hope of his age, and stay of his house—the music of my father's praise still ringing on my heart—I do affirm that I knew a prouder bliss than if Trevanion had placed Fanny's hand in mine, and said, "She is yours."

And now the die was cast—the decision made. It was with no regret that I wrote to Trevanion to decline his offers. Nor was the sacrifice so great—even putting aside the natural pride which had before inclined to it—as it may seem to some; for, restless though I was, I had labored to constrain myself to other views of life than those which close the vistas of ambition with images of the terrestrial deities—Power and Rank. Had I not been behind the scenes, noted all of joy and of peace that the pursuit of power had cost Trevanion, and seen how little of happiness rank gave even to one of the polished habits and graceful attributes of Lord Castleton? Yet each nature seemed fitted so well—the first for power, the last for rank! It is marvellous with what liberality Providence atones for the partial dispensations of Fortune. Independence, or the vigorous pursuit of it; affection, with its hopes and its rewards; a life only rendered by Art more susceptible to Nature—in which the physical enjoyments are pure and healthful—in which the moral faculties expand harmoniously with the intellectual—and the heart is at peace with the mind; is this a mean lot for ambition to desire—and is it so far out of human reach? "Know thyself," said the old philosophy. "Improve thyself," saith the new. The great object of the Sojourner in Time is not to waste all his passions and gifts on the things external, that he must leave behind—that which he cultivates within is all that he can carry into the Eternal Progress. We are here but as schoolboys, whose life begins where school ends; and the battles we fought with our rivals, and the toys that we shared with our playmates, and the names that we carved, high or low, on the wall, above our desks—will they so much bestead us hereafter? As new fates crowd upon us, can they more than pass through the memory with a smile or a sigh? Look back to thy school days, and answer.

CHAPTER XI.

Two weeks since the date of the preceding chapter, have passed; we have slept our last, for long years to come, on the English soil. It is night—and Vivian has been admitted to an interview with his father. They have been together alone an hour and more, and I and my father will not disturb them. But the clock strikes—the hour is late—the ship sails to-night—we should be on board. And as we two stand below, the door opens in the room above, and a heavy step descends the stairs; the father is leaning on the son's arm. You should see how timidly the son guides the halting step. And now as the light gleams on their faces, there are tears on Vivian's cheek; but the face of Roland seems calm and happy. Happy! when about to be separated, perhaps for ever, from his son? Yes, happy, because he has found a son for the first time; and is not thinking of years and absence, and the chance of death—but thankful for the Divine Mercy, and cherishing celestial hope. If ye wonder why Roland is happy in such an hour, how vainly have I sought to make him breathe, and live, and move before you!

* * * * *

We are on board; our luggage all went first.

I had had time, with the help of a carpenter, to knock up cabins for Vivian, Guy Bolding, and myself, in the hold. For, thinking we could not too soon lay aside the pretensions of Europe—"*de*-fine-gentlemanize" ourselves, as Trevanion recommended—we had engaged steerage passage, to the great humoring of our finances. We had, too, the luxury to be by ourselves, and our own Cumberland folks were round us, as our friends and servants both.

We are on board, and have looked our last on those we are to leave, and we stand on deck leaning on each other. We are on board, and the lights, near and far, shine from the vast city; and the stars are on high, bright and clear, as for the first mariners of old. Strange noises, rough voices, and crackling cords, and here and there the sobs of women, mingling with the oaths of men. Now the swing and heave of the vessel—the dreary sense of exile that comes when the ship fairly moves over the waters. And still we stood, and looked, and listened; silent, and leaning on each other.

Night deepened, the city vanished—not a gleam from its myriad lights! The river widened and widened. How cold comes the wind! —is that a gale from the sea? The stars grow faint—the moon has sunk. And now, how desolate seem the waters in the comfortless gray of dawn! Then we shivered and looked at each other, and muttered something that was not the thought deepest at our hearts, and crept into our berths—feeling sure it was not for sleep. And sleep came on us, soft and kind. The ocean lulled the exiles as on a mother's breast.

PART SEVENTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE stage-scene has dropped. Settle yourselves, my good audience; chat each with his neighbor. Dear madam, in the boxes, take up your opera-glass and look about you. Treat Tom and pretty Sal to some of those fine oranges, O thou happy looking mother in the two-shilling gallery! Yes, brave 'prentice boys, in the tier above, the cat-call by all means! And you, "most potent, grave, and reverend seigneurs," in the front row of the pit—practiced critics and steady old play-goers—who shake your heads at new actors and playwrights, and, true to the creed of your youth, (for the which all honor to you!) firmly believe that we are shorter by the head than those giants our grandfathers—laugh or scold as you will, while the drop-scene still shuts out the stage. It is just that you should all amuse yourselves in your own way, O spectators! for the interval is long. All the actors have to change their dresses; all the scene-shifters are at work, sliding the "sides" of a new world into their grooves; and in high disdain of all unity of time, as of place, you will see in the play-bills that there is a great demand on your belief. You are called upon to suppose that we are older by five years than when you last saw us "fret our hour upon the stage." Five years! the author tells us especially to humor the belief by letting the drop-scene linger longer than usual between the lamps and the stage.

Play up! O ye fiddles and kettle-drums! the time is elapsed. Stop that cat-call, young gentleman!—heads down in the pit there! Now the flourish is over—the scene draws up: look before.

A bright, clear, transparent atmosphere—bright as that of the East, but vigorous and bracing as the air of the North; a broad and fair river, rolling through wide grassy plains; yonder, far in the distance, stretch away vast forests of evergreen, and gentle slopes break the line of the cloudless horizon; see the pastures, Arcadian with sheep in hundreds and thousands—Thyrsis and Menalcas would have had hard labor to count them, and small time, I fear, for singing songs about Daphne. But, alas! Daphnes are rare: no nymphs with garlands and crooks trip over those pastures.

Turn your eyes to the right, nearer the river; just parted by a low fence from the thirty acres or so that are farmed for amusement or convenience, not for profit—*that* comes from the sheep—you catch a glimpse of a garden. Look not so scornfully at the primitive horticulture—such gardens are rare in the Bush. I doubt if the stately King of the Peak ever more rejoiced in the famous conservatory, through which you may drive in your carriage, than do the sons of the Bush in the herbs and blossoms which taste and breathe of the old fatherland. Go on, and behold the palace of the patriarchs—it is of wood, I grant you, but the house we build with our own hands is always a palace. Did you ever build one when you were a boy? And the lords of that palace are lords of the land, almost as far as you can see, and of those numberless flocks; and, better still, of a health which an antediluvian might have envied, and of nerves so seasoned with horse-breaking, cattle-driving, fighting with wild blacks—chases from them and after them, for life and for death—that if any passion vex the breast of those kings of the Bushland, fear at least is erased from the list.

See here and there through the landscape, rude huts like the masters'—wild spirits and

fierce dwell within. But they are tamed into order by plenty and hope; by the hand open but firm, by the eye keen but just.

Now, out from those woods, over those green rolling plains, harum-scarum, helter-skelter, long hair flying wild, and all bearded, as a Turk or a pard, comes a rider you recognize. The rider dismounts, and another old acquaintance turns from a shepherd, with whom he has been conversing on matters that never plagued Thyrsis and Menalcas, whose sheep seem to have been innocent of foot-rot and scab—and accosts the horseman.

PISISTRATUS.—My dear Guy, where on earth have you been?

GUY (producing a book from his pocket, with great triumph).—There! Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. I could not get the squatter to let me have *Kenilworth*, though I offered him three sheep for it. Dull old fellow, that Dr. Johnson, I suspect; so much the better, the book will last all the longer. And here's a Sydney paper, too, only two months old! (Guy takes a short pipe, or dodeen, from his hat, in the band of which it had been stuck, fills and lights it.)

PISISTRATUS.—You must have ridden thirty miles at the least. To think of *your* turning book-hunter, Guy!

GUY BOLDING (philosophically).—Ay, one don't know the worth of a thing till one has lost it. No sneers at me, old fellow; you, too, declared that you were bothered out of your life by those books, till you found how long the evenings were without them. Then, the first new book we got—an old volume of the *Spectator!*—such fun!

PISISTRATUS.—Very true. The brown cow has calved in your absence. Do you know, Guy, I think we shall have no scab in the fold this year. If so, there will be a rare sum to lay by! Things look up with us now, Guy.

GUY BOLDING.—Yes! Very different from the first two years. You drew a long face then. How wise you were, to insist on our learning experience at another man's station before we hazarded our own capital! But, by Jove! those sheep, at first, were enough to plague a man out of his wits. What with the wild dogs, just as the sheep had been washed and ready to shear; then that cursed scabby sheep of Joe Timmes's, that we caught rubbing his sides so complacently against our unsuspecting poor ewes. I wonder we did not run away. But "*Patientia fit*"—what is that line in Horace! Never mind now. "It is a long lane that has no turning" does just as well as anything in Horace, and Virgil to boot. I say, has not Vivian been here?

PISISTRATUS.—No; but he will be sure to come to-day.

GUY BOLDING.—He has much the best berth of it. Horse-breeding and cattle-feeding; galloping after those wild devils; lost in a forest of horns; beasts lowing, scampering, goring, tearing off like mad buffaloes; horses galloping up hill, down hill, over rocks, stones, and timber; whips cracking, men shouting—your neck all but broken; a great bull making at you full rush. Such fun! Sheep are dull things to look at after a bull-hunt and a cattle feast.

PISISTRATUS.—Every man to his taste in the Bush. One may make one's money more easily and safely, with more adventure and sport, in the bucolic department. But one makes larger profit and quicker fortune, with good luck and good care, in the pastoral—and our object, I take it, is to get back to England as soon as we can.

GUY BOLDING.—Humph! I should be content to live and die in the Bush—nothing like it, if women were not so scarce. To think of the redundant spinster population at home, and not a spinster here to be seen within thirty miles, save Bet Goggins, indeed—and she has only one eye! But to return to Vivian—why should it be our object, more than his, to get back to England as soon as we can?

PISISTRATUS.—Not more, certainly. But you saw that an excitement more stirring than that we find in the sheep had become necessary to him. You know he was growing dull and dejected; the cattle station was to be sold a bargain. And then the Durham bulls, and the Yorkshire horses, which Mr. Trevanion sent you and me out as presents were so tempting, I thought we might fairly add one speculation to another; and since one of us must superintend the bucolics, and two of us were required for the pastorals, I think Vivian was the best of us three to intrust with the first; and, certainly, it has succeeded as yet.

GUY.—Why, yes, Vivian is quite in his element—always in action, and always in command. Let him be first in everything, and there is not a finer fellow, nor a better tem-

pered—present company excepted. Hark! the dogs, the crack of the whip; there he is. And now, I suppose, we may go to dinner.

Enter VIVIAN.

His frame has grown more athletic; his eye, more steadfast and less restless, looks you full in the face. His smile is more open; but there is a melancholy in his expression, almost approaching to gloom. His dress is the same as that of Pisistratus and Guy—white vest and trousers; loose neckcloth, rather gay in color; broad cabbage-leaf hat; his moustache and beard are trimmed with more care than ours. He has a large whip in his hand, and a gun slung across his shoulders. Greetings are exchanged; mutual inquiries as to cattle and sheep, and the last horses despatched to the Indian market. Guy shows the *Lives of the Poets;* Vivian asks if it is possible to get the *Life of Clive*, or *Napoleon*, or a copy of *Plutarch.* Guy shakes his head—says, if a *Robinson Crusoe* will do as well, he has seen one in a very tattered state, but in too great request to be had a bargain.

The party turn into the hut. Miserable animals are bachelors in all countries; but most miserable in Bushland. A man does not know what a helpmate of the soft sex is in the Old World, where women seem a matter of course. But in the Bush, a wife is literally bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh—your better half, your ministering angel, your Eve of the Eden—in short, all that poets have sung, or young orators say at public dinners, when called upon to give the toast of "The Ladies." Alas! we are three bachelors, but we are better off than bachelors often are in the Bush. For the wife of the shepherd I took from Cumberland does me and Bolding the honor to live in our hut, and make things tidy and comfortable. She has had a couple of children since we have been in the Bush; a wing has been added to the hut for that increase of family. The children, I dare say, one might have thought a sad nuisance in England, but I declare that, surrounded as one is by great bearded men, from sunrise to sunset, there is something humanizing, musical, and Christian-like in the very squall of the baby. There it goes—bless it! As for my other companions from Cumberland, Miles Square, the most aspiring of all, has long left me, and is superintendent to a great sheep-owner some two hundred miles off. The Will-o'-the-Wisp is consigned to the cattle station, where he is Vivian's head man, finding time now and then to indulge his old poaching propensities at the expense of parrots, black cockatoos, pigeons, and kangaroos. The shepherd remains with us, and does not seem, honest fellow, to care to better himself; he has a feeling of clanship, which keeps down the ambition common in Australia. And his wife—such a treasure! I assure you, the sight of her smooth, smiling woman's face, when we return home at nightfall, and the very flow of her gown, as she turns the "dampers" * in the ashes, and fills the teapot, have in them something holy and angelical. How lucky our Cumberland swain is not jealous! Not that there is any cause, enviable dog though he be; but where Desdemonas are so scarce, if you could but guess how green-eyed their Othellos generally are! Excellent husbands, it is true—none better; but you had better think twice before you attempt to play the Cassio in Bushland! There, however, she is, dear creature!—rattling among knives and forks, smoothing the table-cloth, setting on the salt beef, and that rare luxury of pickles (the last pot in our store), and the produce of our garden and poultry-yard, which few Bushmen can boast of—and the dampers, and a pot of tea to each banqueter; no wine, beer, nor spirits,—those are only for shearing-time. We have just said grace (a fashion retained from the holy mother-country), when, bless my soul! what a clatter without, what a tramping of feet, what a barking of dogs! Some guests have arrived. They are always welcome in Bushland! Perhaps a cattle-buyer in search of Vivian; perhaps that cursed squatter, whose sheep are always migrating to ours. Never mind, a hearty welcome to all—friend or foe. The door opens; one, two, three strangers. More plates and knives; draw your stools; just in time. First eat, then—what news?

Just as the strangers sit down a voice is heard at the door—

"You will take particular care of this horse, young man: walk him about a little; wash his back with salt and water. Just unbuckle the saddle-bags; give them to me. Oh! safe enough, I dare say—but papers of conse-

* A damper is a cake of flour baked without yeast, in the ashes.

quence. The prosperity of the colony depends on these papers. What would become of you all if any accident happened to them, I shudder to think."

And here, attired in a twill shooting-jacket, budding with gilt buttons, impressed with a well-remembered device; a cabbage-leaf hat shading a face rarely seen in the Bush—a face smooth as razor could make it: neat, trim, respectable-looking as ever—his arm full of saddle-bags, and his nostrils gently distended, inhaling the steam of the banquet, walks in—Uncle Jack.

PISISTRATUS (leaping up).—Is it possible? *You* in Australia—you in the Bush!

Uncle Jack, not recognizing Pisistratus in the tall-bearded man who is making a plunge at him, recedes in alarm, exclaiming—"Who are you?—never saw you before, sir! I suppose you'll say next that *I owe you something!*"

PISISTRATUS.—Uncle Jack!

UNCLE JACK (dropping his saddle-bags).—Nephew!—Heaven be praised! Come to my arms!

They embrace; mutual introductions to the company—Mr. Vivian, Mr. Bolding, on the one side—Major MacBlarney, Mr. Bullion, Mr. Emanuel Speck, on the other. Major MacBlarney is a fine portly man, with a slight Dublin brogue, who squeezes your hand as he would a sponge. Mr. Bullion—reserved and haughty—wears green spectacles, and gives you a fore-finger. Mr. Emanuel Speck—unusually smart for the Bush, with a blue satin stock, and one of those blouses common in Germany, with elaborate hems, and pockets enough for Briareus to have put all his hands into at once—is thin, civil, and stoops—bows, smiles, and sits down to dinner again, with the air of a man accustomed to attend to the main chance.

UNCLE JACK (his mouth full of beef).—Famous beef!—breed it yourself, eh? Slow work that cattle-feeding!—(Empties the rest of the pickle-jar into his plate.) Must learn to go ahead in the New World—railway times these! We can put him up to a thing or two—eh Bullion? (Whispering me)—Great capitalist that Bullion! LOOK AT HIM!

MR. BULLION (gravely).—A thing or two! If he has capital—you have said it, Mr. Tibbets. (Looks round for the pickles—the green spectacles remain fixed upon Uncle Jack's plate.)

UNCLE JACK.—All that this colony wants is a few men like us, with capital and spirit. Instead of paying paupers to emigrate, they should pay rich men to come—eh, Speck?

While Uncle Jack turns to Mr. Speck, Mr. Bullion fixes his fork in a pickled onion in Jack's plate, and transfers it to his own—observing, not as incidentally to the onion, but to truth in general—"A man, gentlemen, in this country, has only to keep his eyes on the look-out, and seize on the first advantage!—resources are incalculable!"

Uncle Jack, returning to the plate and missing the onion, forestalls Mr. Speck in seizing the last potato—observing also, and in the same philosophical and generalizing spirit as Mr. Bullion—"The great thing in this country is to be always beforehand: discovery and invention, promptitude and decision!—that's your go. 'Pon my life, one picks up sad vulgar sayings among the natives here!—'that's your go!' shocking! What would your poor father say? How is he—good Austin? Well?—that's right: and my dear sister? Ah, that damnable Peck!—still harping on the *Anti-Capitalist*, eh? But I'll make it up to you all now. Gentlemen, charge your glasses—a bumper-toast."

MR. SPECK (in an affected tone).—I respond to the sentiment in a flowing cup. Glasses are not forthcoming.

UNCLE JACK.—A bumper-toast to the health of the future millionaire, whom I present to you in my nephew and sole heir—Pisistratus Caxton, Esq. Yes, gentlemen, I here publicly announce to you that this gentleman will be the inheritor of all my wealth—freehold, leasehold, agricultural, and mineral; and when I am in the cold grave—(takes out his pocket-handkerchief)—and nothing remains of poor John Tibbets, look upon that gentleman, and say, "John Tibbets lives again!"

MR. SPECK (chauntingly),—

"Let the bumper-toast go round."

GUY BOLDING.—Hip, hip, hurrah!—three times three! What fun!

Order is restored; dinner-things are cleared; each gentleman lights his pipe.

VIVIAN.—What news from England?

MR. BULLION.—As to the funds, sir?

MR. SPECK.—I suppose you mean, rather as to the railways: great fortunes will be made

there, sir; but still I think that our speculalations here will—

VIVIAN.—I beg pardon for interrupting you, sir; but I thought, in the last papers, that there seemed something hostile in the temper of the French. No chance of a war?

MAJOR MACBLARNEY.—Is it the wars you'd be after, young gintleman? If me interest at the Horse Guards can avail you, bedad! you'd make a proud man of Major MacBlarney.

MR. BULLION (authoritatively).—No, sir, we won't have a war: the capitalists of Europe and Australia won't have it. The Rothschilds, and a few others that shall be nameless, have only got to do *this*, sir—(Mr. Bullion buttons up his pockets)—and we'll do it too; and then what becomes of your war, sir? (Mr. Bullion snaps his pipe in the vehemence with which he brings his hand on the table, turns round the green spectacles, and takes up Mr. Speck's pipe, which that gentleman had laid aside in an unguarded moment.)

VIVIAN.—But the campaign in India?

MAJOR MACBLARNEY.—Oh!—and if it's the Ingees you'd—

BULLION (refilling Speck's pipe from Guy Bolding's exclusive tobacco-pouch, and interrupting the Major).—India—that's another matter: I don't object to that! War there—rather good for the money market than otherwise!

VIVIAN.—What news there, then?

MR. BULLION.—Don't know—haven't got India stock.

MR. SPECK.—Nor I either. The day for India is over: this is our India now. (Misses his tobacco-pipe; sees it in Bullion's mouth, and stares aghast!—N. B. The pipe is not a clay *dodeen*, but a small meerschaum—irreplaceable in Bushland.)

PISISTRATUS.—Well, uncle, but I am at a loss to understand what new scheme you have in hand. Something benevolent, I am sure—something for your fellow-creatures—for philanthropy and mankind?

MR. BULLION (starting).—Why, young man, are you as green as all that?

PISISTRATUS.—I, sir—no—Heaven forbid! But my—(Uncle Jack holds up his forefinger imploringly, and spills his tea over the pantaloons of his nephew!)

Pisistratus, wroth at the effect of the tea, and therefore obdurate to the sign of the forefinger, continues rapidly, "But my uncle *is!*—some Grand National-Imperial-Colonial-Anti-Monopoly"—

UNCLE JACK.—Pooh! pooh! What a droll boy it is!

MR. BULLION (solemnly).—With these notions, which not even in jest should be fathered on my respectable and intelligent friend here—(Uncle Jack bows)—I am afraid you will never get on in the world, Mr. Caxton. I don't think our speculations will suit *you!* It is growing late, gentlemen: we must push on.

UNCLE JACK (jumping up).—And I have so much to say to the dear boy. Excuse us: you know the feeling of an uncle! (Takes my arm, and leads me out of the hut.)

UNCLE JACK (as soon as we are in the air).—You'll ruin us—you, me, and your father and mother. Yes! What do you think I work and slave myself for but for you and yours? Ruin us all, I say, if you talk in that way before Bullion! His heart is as hard as the Bank of England's—and quite right he is, too. Fellow-creatures!—stuff! I have renounced that delusion—the generous follies of my youth! I begin at last to live for myself—that is, for self and relatives! I shall succeed this time, you'll see!

PISISTRATUS.—Indeed, Uncle, I hope so sincerely; and, to do you justice, there is always something very clever in your ideas—only they don't—

UNCLE JACK (interrupting me with a groan).—The fortunes that other men have gained by my ideas!—shocking to think of! What!—and shall I be reproached if I live no longer for such a set of thieving, greedy, ungrateful knaves? No, no! Number One shall be my maxim; and I'll make you a Crœsus, my boy—I will.

Pisistratus, after grateful acknowledgments for all prospective benefits, inquires how long Jack has been in Australia; what brought him into the colony; and what are his present views. Learns, to his astonishment, that Uncle Jack has been four years in the colony; that he sailed the year after Pisistratus—induced, he says, by that illustrious example, and by some mysterious agency or commission, which he will not explain, emanating either from the Colonial Office, or an Emigration Company. Uncle Jack has been thriving wonderfully since he abandoned his fellow-creatures. His first

speculation, on arriving at the colony, was in buying some houses in Sydney, which (by those fluctuations in prices common to the extremes of the colonial mind—which is one while skipping up the rainbow with Hope, and at another plunging into Acherontian abysses with Despair) he bought excessively cheap, and sold excessively dear. But his grand experiment has been in connection with the infant settlement of Adelaide, of which he considers himself one of the first founders; and as, in the rush of emigration which poured to that favored establishment in the earlier years of its existence,—rolling on its tide all manner of credulous and inexperienced adventurers,—vast sums were lost, so, of those sums, certain fragments and pickings were easily griped and gathered up by a man of Uncle Jack's readiness and dexterity. Uncle Jack had contrived to procure excellent letters of introduction to the colonial grandees: he got into close connection with some of the principal parties seeking to establish a monopoly of land (which has since been in great measure effected, by raising the price, and excluding the small fry of petty capitalists); and effectually imposed on them, as a man with a vast knowledge of public business—in the confidence of great men at home—considerable influence with the English press, etc., etc. And no discredit to their discernment; for Jack, when he pleased, had a way with him that was almost irresistible. In this manner he contrived to associate himself and his earnings with men really of large capital, and long practical experience in the best mode by which that capital might be employed. He was thus admitted into a partnership (so far as his means went) with Mr. Bullion, who was one of the largest sheep-owners and landholders in the colony; though, having many other nests to feather, that gentleman resided in state at Sydney, and left his runs and stations to the care of overseers and superintendents. But land jobbing was Jack's special delight; and an ingenious German having lately declared that the neighborhood of Adelaide betrayed the existence of those mineral treasures which have since been brought to day, Mr. Tibbets had persuaded Bullion and the other gentlemen now accompanying him, to undertake the land journey from Sydney to Adelaide, privily and quietly, to ascertain the truth of the German's report, which was at present very little believed. If the ground failed of mines, Uncle Jack's account convinced his associates that mines quite as profitable might be found in the pockets of the raw adventurers, who were ready to buy one year at the dearest market, and driven to sell the next at the cheapest.

"But," concluded Uncle Jack, with a sly look, and giving me a poke in the ribs, "I've had to do with mines before now, and know what they are. I'll let nobody but you into my pet scheme; you shall go shares if you like. The scheme is as plain as a problem in Euclid,—if the German is right, and there are mines, why, the mines will be worked. Then miners must be employed; but miners must eat, drink, and spend their money. The thing is to get *that* money. Do you take?"

PISISTRATUS.—Not at all?

UNCLE JACK (majestically).—A Great Grog and Store Depôt! The miners want grog and stores, come to your depôt; you take their money; Q.E.D.! Shares—eh, you dog? Cribs, as we said at school. Put in a paltry thousand or two, and you shall go halves.

PISISTRATUS (vehemently).—Not for all the mines of Potosi.

UNCLE JACK (good-humoredly).—Well, it sha'n't be the worse for you. I sha'n't alter my will, in spite of your want of confidence. Your young friend,—that Mr. Vivian, I think you call him—intelligent-looking fellow, sharper than the other, I guess,—would *he* like a share?

PISISTRATUS.—In the grog depôt? You had better ask him!

UNCLE JACK.—What! you pretend to be aristocratic in the Bush! Too good. Ha, ha—they're calling to me—we must be off.

PISISTRATUS.—I will ride with you a few miles. What say you, Vivian? and you, Guy?—

As the whole party now joined us.

Guy prefers basking in the sun, and reading the *Lives of the Poets*. Vivian assents; we accompany the party till sunset. Major MacBlarney prodigalizes his offers of service in every conceivable department of life, and winds up with an assurance that, if we want anything in those departments connected with engineering—such as mining, mapping, surveying, etc.—he will serve us, bedad, for nothing, or next to it. We suspect Major MacBlarney to be a civil

engineer, suffering under the innocent hallucination that he has been in the army.

Mr. Speck lets out to me, in a confidential whisper, that Mr. Bullion is monstrous rich, and has made his fortune from small beginnings, by never letting a good thing go. I think of Uncle Jack's pickled onion, and Mr. Speck's meerschaum, and perceive, with respectful admiration, that Mr. Bullion acts uniformly on one grand system. Ten minutes afterwards, Mr. Bullion observes, in a tone equally confidential, that Mr. Speck, though so smiling and civil, is as sharp as a needle; and that if I want any shares in the new speculation, or indeed in any other, I had better come at once to Bullion, who would not deceive me for my weight in gold. "Not," added Bullion, "that I have anything to say against Speck. He is well enough to do in the world—a warm man, sir; and when a man is really warm, I am the last person to think of his little faults, and turn on him the cold shoulder."

"Adieu!" said Uncle Jack, pulling out once more his pocket-handkerchief; "my love to all at home." And sinking his voice into a whisper, "If ever you think better of the grog and store depôt, nephew, you'll find an uncle's heart in this bosom!"

CHAPTER II.

It was night as Vivian and myself rode slowly home. Night in Australia! How impossible to describe its beauty! Heaven seems, in that new world, so much nearer to earth! Every star stands out so bright and particular, as if fresh from the time when the Maker willed it. And the moon like a large silvery sun;—the least object on which it shines so distinct and so still.* Now and then a sound breaks the silence, but a sound so much in harmony with the solitude that it only deepens its charms. Hark! the low cry of a night-bird, from yonder glen amidst the small gray gleaming rocks. Hark! as night deepens, the bark of the distant watch-dog, or the low strange howl of his more savage species, from which he defends the fold. Hark! the echo catches the sound, and flings it sportively from hill to hill—farther, and farther, and farther down, till all again is hushed, and the flowers hang noiseless over your head, as you ride through a grove of the giant gum-trees. Now the air is literally charged with the odors, and the sense of fragrance grows almost painful in its pleasure. You quicken your pace, and escape again into the open plains and the full moonlight, and through the slender tea-trees catch the gleam of the river, and in the exquisite fineness of the atmosphere hear the soothing sound of its murmur.

Pisistratus.—And this land has become the heritage of our people! Methinks I see, as I gaze around, the scheme of the All-beneficent Father disentangling itself clean through the troubled history of mankind. How mysteriously, while Europe rears its populations, and fulfills its civilizing mission, these realms have been concealed from its eyes—divulged to us just as civilization needs the solution to its problems; a vent for feverish energies, baffled in the crowd; offering bred to the famished, hope to the desperate; in every truth enabling the "New World to redress the balance of the Old." Here, what a Latium for the wandering spirits,

> "On various seas by various tempests toss'd."

Here, the actual Æneid passes before our eyes. From the huts of the exiles scattered over this hardier Italy, who cannot see in the future,

> "A race from whence new Alban sires shall come,
> And the long glories of a future Rome?"

Vivian (mournfully).—Is it from the outcasts of the workhouse, the prison, and the transport-ship, that a second Rome is to arise?

Pisistratus.—There is something in this new soil—in the labor it calls forth, in the hope it inspires, in the sense of property, which I take to be the core of social morals—that expedites the work of redemption with marvellous rapidity. Take them altogether, whatever their origin, or whatever brought them hither, they are a fine, manly, frank-hearted race, these colonists now!—rude, not mean, especially in the Bush, and, I suspect, will ultimately become as gallant and honest a population as that now springing up in South

* "I have frequently," says Mr. Wilkinson, in his invaluable work upon South Australia, at once so graphic and so practical, "been out on a journey in such a night, and whilst allowing the horse his own time to walk along the road, have solaced myself by reading in the still moonlight."

Australia, from which convicts are excluded—and happily excluded—for the distinction will sharpen emulation. As to the rest, and in direct answer to your question, I fancy even the emancipist part of our population every wit as respectable as the mongrel robbers under Romulus.

VIVIAN.—But were *they* not soldiers?—I mean the first Romans?

PISISTRATUS.—My dear cousin, we are in advance of those grim outcasts, if we can get lands, houses, and wives (though the last is difficult, and it is well that we have no white Sabines in the neighborhood), without that same soldiering which was the necessity of their existence.

VIVIAN (after a pause).—I have written to my father, and to yours more fully—stating in the one letter my wish, in the other trying to explain the feelings from which it springs.

PISISTRATUS.—Are the letters gone?

VIVIAN.—Yes.

PISISTRATUS.—And you would not show them to me!

VIVIAN.—Do not speak so reproachfully. I promised your father to pour out my whole heart to him whenever it was troubled and at strife. I promise you now that I will go by his advice.

PISISTRATUS (disconsolately).—What is there in this military life for which you yearn that can yield you more food for healthful excitement and stirring adventure than your present pursuits afford?

VIVIAN.—Distinction! You do not see the difference between us. You have but a fortune to make, I have a name to redeem; you look calmly on to the future; I have a dark blot to erase from the past.

PISISTRATUS (soothingly). — It is erased. Five years of no weak bewailings, but of manly reform, steadfast industry, conduct so blameless that even Guy (whom I look upon as the incarnation of blunt English honesty) half doubts whether you are '*cute* enough for "a station,"—a character already so high that I long for the hour when you will again take your father's spotless name, and give me the pride to own our kinship to the world, all this surely redeems the errors arising from an uneducated childhood and a wandering youth.

VIVIAN (leaning over his horse, and putting his hand on my shoulder).—"My dear friend, what do I owe you!" Then recovering his emotion, and pushing on at a quicker pace, while he continues to speak, "But can you not see that, just in proportion as my comprehension of right would become clear and strong, so my conscience would become also more sensitive and reproachful; and the better I understand my gallant father, the more I must desire to be as he would have had his son. Do you think it would content him, could he see me branding cattle, and bargaining with bullock-drivers?—Was it not the strongest wish of his heart that I should adopt his own career? Have I not heard you say that he would have had you too a soldier, but for your mother? I have no mother! If I made thousands, and tens of thousands, by this ignoble calling, would they give my father half the pleasure that he would feel at seeing my name honorably mentioned in a despatch? No, no! You have banished the gypsy blood, and now the soldier's breaks out! Oh for one glorious day in which I may clear my way into fair repute, as our fathers before us!—when tears of proud joy may flow from those eyes that have wept such hot drops at my shame. When *she*, too, in her high station beside that sleek lord, may say, 'His heart was not so vile, after all!' Don't argue with me—it is in vain! Pray, rather, that I may have leave to work out my own way; for I tell you that, if condemned to stay here, I may not murmur aloud—I may go through this round of low duties as the brute turns the wheel of a mill! but my heart will prey on itself, and you shall soon write on my gravestone the epitaph of the poor poet you told us of, whose true disease was the thirst of glory—'Here lies one whose name was written in water.'"

I had no answer; that contagious ambition made my own veins run more warmly, and my own heart beat with a louder tumult. Amidst the pastoral scenes, and under the tranquil moonlight of the New, the Old World, even in me, rude Bushman, claimed for a while its son. But as we rode on, the air, so inexpressibly buoyant, yet soothing as an anodyne, restored me to peaceful Nature. Now the flocks, in their snowy clusters, were seen sleeping under the stars; hark! the welcome of the watch-dogs; see the light gleaming far from the chink of the door! And, pausing, I said aloud, "No, there is more glory in laying these rough

foundations of a mighty state, though no trumpets resound with your victory—though no laurels shall shadow your tomb—than in forcing the onward progress of your race over burning cities and hecatombs of men!" I looked round for Vivian's answer; but, ere I spoke, he had spurred from my side, and I saw the wild dogs slinking back from the hoofs of his horse, as he rode at speed, on the sward, through the moonlight.

CHAPTER III.

THE weeks and the months rolled on, and the replies to Vivian's letters came at last: I forboded too well their purport. I knew that my father could not set himself in opposition to the deliberate and cherished desire of a man who had now arrived at the full strength of his understanding, and must be left at liberty to make his own election of the paths of life. Long after that date, I saw Vivian's letter to my father; and even his conversation had scarcely prepared me for the pathos of that confession of a mind remarkable alike for its strength and its weakness. If born in the age, or submitted to the influences, of religious enthusiasm, here was a nature that, awaking from sin, could not have been contented with the sober duties of mediocre goodness—that would have plunged into the fiery depths of monkish fanaticism—wrestled with the fiend in the hermitage, or marched barefoot on the infidel with the sackcloth for armor—the cross for a sword. Now, the impatient desire for redemption took a more mundane direction, but with something that seemed almost spiritual in its fervor. And this enthusiasm flowed through strata of such profound melancholy! Deny it a vent, and it might sicken into lethargy, or fret itself into madness—give it the vent, and it might vivify and fertilize as it swept along.

My father's reply to this letter was what might be expected. It gently reinforced the old lessons in the distinctions between aspirations towards the perfecting ourselves—aspirations that are never in vain—and the morbid passion for applause from others, which shifts conscience from our own bosoms to the confused Babel of the crowd, and calls it "fame." But my father, in his counsels, did not seek to oppose a mind so obstinately bent upon a single course—he sought rather to guide and strengthen it in the way it should go. The seas of human life are wide. Wisdom may suggest the voyage, but it must first look to the condition of the ship, and the nature of the merchandise to exchange. Not every vessel that sails from Tarshish can bring back the gold of Ophir; but shall it therefore rot in the harbor? No; give its sails to the wind!

But I had expected that Roland's letter to his son would have been full of joy and exultation—joy there was none in it, yet exultation there might be, though serious, grave, and subdued. In the proud assent that the old soldier gave to his son's wish, in his entire comprehension of motives so akin to his own nature, there was yet a visible sorrow; it seemed even as if he constrained himself to the assent he gave. Not till I had read it again and again, could I divine Roland's feelings while he wrote. At this distance of time, I comprehend them well. Had he sent from his side, into noble warfare, some boy fresh to life, new to sin, with an enthusiasm pure and single-hearted as his own young chivalrous ardor, then, with all a soldier's joy, he had yielded a cheerful tribute to the hosts of England; but here he recognized, though perhaps dimly, not the frank military fervor, but the stern desire of expiation, and in that thought he admitted forebodings that would have been otherwise rejected, so that, at the close of the letter, it seemed not the fiery war-seasoned Roland that wrote, but rather some timid, anxious mother. Warnings and entreaties and cautions not to be rash, and assurances that the best soldiers were ever the most prudent; were these the counsels of the fierce veteran who, at the head of the forlorn hope, had mounted the wall at ——, his sword between his teeth!

But, whatever his presentiments, Roland had yielded at once to his son's prayer—hastened to London at the receipt of his letter—obtained a commission in a regiment now in active service in India; and that commission was made out in his son's name. The commission, with an order to join the regiment as soon as possible, accompanied the letter.

And Vivian, pointing to the name addressed to him, said, "Now, indeed, I may resume this name, and, next to Heaven, will I hold it

sacred! It shall guide me to glory in life, or my father shall read it, without shame, on my tomb!" I see him before me, as he stood then—his form erect, his dark eyes solemn in their light, a serenity in his smile, a grandeur on his brow, that I had never marked till then! Was that the same man I had recoiled from as the sneering cynic, shuddered at as the audacious traitor, or wept over as the cowering outcast? How little the nobleness of aspect depends on symmetry of feature, or the mere proportions of form! What dignity robes the man who is filled with a lofty thought!

CHAPTER IV.

He is gone! he has left a void in my existence. I had grown to love him so well; I had been so proud when men praised him. My love was a sort of self-love—I had looked upon him in part as the work of my own hands. I am a long time ere I can settle back, with good heart, to my pastoral life. Before my cousin went, we cast up our gains, and settled our shares. When he resigned the allowance which Roland had made him, his father secretly gave to me, for his use, a sum equal to that which I and Guy Bolding brought into the common stock. Roland had raised the sum upon mortgage; and, while the interest was a trivial deduction from his income, compared to the former allowance, the capital was much more useful to his son than a mere yearly payment could have been. Thus, between us, we had a considerable sum for Australian settlers—£4500. For the first two years we made nothing; indeed, great part of the first year was spent in learning our art, at the station of an old settler. But, at the end of the third year, our flocks having then become very considerable, we cleared a return beyond my most sanguine expectations. And when my cousin left, just in the sixth year of exile, our shares amounted to £4000 each, exclusive of the value of the two stations. My cousin had, at first, wished that I should forward his share to his father, but he soon saw that Roland would never take it; and it was finally agreed that it should rest in my hands, for me to manage for him, send him out an interest at five per cent, and devote the surplus profits to the increase of his capital. I had now, therefore, the control of £12,000, and we might consider ourselves very respectable capitalists. I kept on the cattle station, by the aid of the Will-o'-the-Wisp, for about two years after Vivian's departure (we had then had it altogether for five). At the end of that time, I sold it and the stock to great advantage. And the sheep—for the "brand" of which I had a high reputation—having wonderfully prospered in the meanwhile, I thought we might safely extend our speculations into new ventures. Glad, too, of a change of scene, I left Bolding in charge of the flocks, and bent my course to Adelaide, for the fame of that new settlement had already disturbed the peace of the Bush. I found Uncle Jack residing near Adelaide, in a very handsome villa, with all the signs and appurtenances of colonial opulence; and report, perhaps, did not exaggerate the gains he had made:—so many strings to his bow—and each arrow, this time, seemed to have gone straight to the white of the butts. I now thought I had acquired knowledge and caution sufficient to avail myself of Uncle Jack's ideas, without ruining myself by following them out in his company; and I saw a kind of retributive justice in making his brain minister to the fortunes which his ideality and constructiveness, according to Squills, had served so notably to impoverish. I must here gratefully acknowledge, that I owed much to this irregular genius. The investigation of the supposed mines had proved unsatisfactory to Mr. Bullion; and they were not fairly discovered till a few years after. But Jack had convinced himself of their existence, and purchased, on his own account, "for an old song," some barren land, which he was persuaded would prove to him a Golconda, one day or other, under the euphonious title (which, indeed, it ultimately established) of the "Tibbets' Wheal." The suspension of the mines, however, fortunately suspended the existence of the Grog and Store Depôt, and Uncle Jack was now assisting in the foundation of Port Philip. Profiting by his advice, I adventured in that new settlement some timid and wary purchases, which I re-sold to considerable advantage. Meanwhile, I must not omit to state briefly what, since my departure from England, had been the ministerial career of Trevanion.

That refining fastidiousness,—that scrupu-

losity of political conscience, which had characterized him as an independent member, and often served, in the opinion both of friend and of foe, to give the attribute of *general* impracticability to a mind that, in all *details*, was so essentially and laboriously practical—might perhaps have founded Trevanion's reputation as a minister, if he could have been a minister without colleagues—if, standing alone, and from the necessary height, he could have placed, clear and single, before the world, his exquisite honesty of purpose, and the width of a statesmanship marvellously accomplished and comprehensive. But Trevanion could not amalgamate with others, nor subscribe to the discipline of a cabinet in which he was not the chief, especially in a policy which must have been thoroughly abhorrent to such a nature—a policy that, of late years, has distinguished not one faction alone, but has seemed so forced upon the more eminent political leaders on either side, that they who take the more charitable view of things may, perhaps, hold it to arise from the necessity of the age, fostered by the temper of the public—I mean the policy of *Expediency*. Certainly not in this book will I introduce the angry elements of party politics; and how should I know much about them? All that I have to say is, that, right or wrong, such a policy must have been at war, every moment, with each principle of Trevanion's statesmanship, and fretted each fibre of his moral constitution. The aristocratic combinations which his alliance with the Castleton interest had brought to his aid, served perhaps to fortify his position in the cabinet; yet aristocratic combinations were of small avail against what seemed the atmospherical epidemic of the age. I could see how his situation had preyed on his mind, when I read a paragraph in the newspapers, "that it was reported, on good authority, that Mr. Trevanion had tendered his resignation, but had been prevailed upon to withdraw it, as his retirement at that moment would break up the government." Some months afterwards came another paragraph to the effect, "that Mr. Trevanion was taken suddenly ill, and that it was feared his illness was of a nature to preclude his resuming his official labors." Then parliament broke up. Before it met again, Mr. Trevanion was gazetted as Earl of Ulverstone, a title that had been once in his family—and had left the administration, unable to encounter the fatigues of office. To an ordinary man, the elevation to an earldom, passing over the lesser honors in the peerage, would have seemed no mean close to a political career; but I felt what profound despair of striving against circumstance for utility—what entanglements with his colleagues, whom he could neither conscientiously support, nor, according to his high old-fashioned notions of party honor and etiquette, energetically oppose—had driven him to abandon that stormy scene in which his existence had been passed. The House of Lords, to that active intellect, was as the retirement of some warrior of old into the cloisters of a convent. The gazette that chronicled the earldom of Ulverstone was the proclamation that Albert Trevanion lived no more for the world of public men. And, indeed, from that date his career vanished out of sight. Trevanion died—the Earl of Ulverstone made no sign.

I had hitherto written but twice to Lady Ellinor during my exile—once upon the marriage of Fanny with Lord Castleton, which took place about six months after I sailed from England, and again, when thanking her husband for some rare animals, equine, pastoral, and bovine, which he had sent as presents to Bolding and myself. I wrote again after Trevanion's elevation to the peerage, and received, in due time, a reply, confirming all my impressions—for it was full of bitterness and gall, accusations of the world, fears for the country: Richelieu himself could not have taken a gloomier view of things, when his levees were deserted, and his power seemed annihilated before the "Day of Dupes." Only one gleam of comfort appeared to visit Lady Ulverstone's breast, and thence to settle prospectively over the future of the world—a second son had been born to Lord Castleton; to that son would descend the estates of Ulverstone, and the representation of that line distinguished by Trevanion, and enriched by Trevanion's wife. Never was there a child of such promise! Not Virgil himself, when he called on the Sicilian Muses to celebrate the advent of a son to Pollio, ever sounded a loftier strain. Here was one, now, perchance, engaged on words of two syllables, called—

"By laboring nature to sustain
The nodding frame of heaven, and earth, and main,

See to their base restored, earth, sea, and air,
And joyful ages from behind in crowding ranks
appear!"

Happy dream which Heaven sends to grandparents! re-baptism of Hope in the font whose drops sprinkle the grandchild!

Time flies on; affairs continue to prosper. I am just leaving the bank at Adelaide with a satisfied air, when I am stopped in the street by bowing acquaintances, who never shook me by the hand before. They shake me by the hand now, and cry—"I wish you joy, sir. That brave fellow, your namesake, is of course your near relation."

"What do you mean?"

"Have not you seen the papers? Here they are."

"Gallant conduct of Ensign de Caxton—promoted to a lieutenancy on the field."—I wipe my eyes and cry—"Thank Heaven—it is my cousin!" Then new hand-shakings, new groups gather round. I feel taller by the head than I was before! We, grumbling English, always quarrelling with each other—the world not wide enough to hold us; and yet, when in the far land some bold deed is done by a countryman, how we feel that we are brothers! how our hearts warm to each other! What a letter I wrote home! and how joyously I went back to the Bush! The Will-o'-the-Wisp has attained to a cattle-station of his own. I go fifty miles out of my way to tell him the news and give him the newspaper; for he knows now that his old master, Vivian, is a Cumberland man—a Caxton. Poor Will-o'-the-Wisp! The tea that night tasted uncommonly like whiskey-punch! Father Mathew forgive us—but if you had been a Cumberland man, and heard the Will-o'-the-Wisp roaring out, "Blue bonnets over the Borders," I think your tea, too, would not have come out of the—caddy!

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT change has occured in our household. Guy's father is dead—his latter years cheered by the accounts of his son's steadiness and prosperity, and by the touching proofs thereof which Guy has exhibited. For he insisted on repaying to his father the old college debts, and the advance of the £1500, begging that the money might go towards his sister's portion. Now, after the old gentleman's death, the sister resolved to come out and live with her dear brother Guy. Another wing is built to the hut. Ambitious plans for a new stone house, to be commenced the following year, are entertained; and Guy has brought back from Adelaide not only a sister, but, to my utter astonishment, a wife, in the shape of a fair friend by whom the sister is accompanied.

The young lady did quite right to come to Australia if she wanted to be married. She was very pretty, and all the beaux in Adelaide were round her in a moment. Guy was in love the first day—in a rage with thirty rivals the next—in despair the third—put the question the fourth—and before the fifteenth was a married man, hastening back with a treasure, of which he fancied all the world was conspiring to rob him. His sister was quite as pretty as her friend, and she, too, had offers enough the moment she landed—only she was romantic and fastidious, and I fancy Guy told her that "I was just made for her."

However, charming though she be—with pretty blue eyes, and her brother's frank smile—I am not enchanted. I fancy she lost all chance of my heart by stepping across the yard in a pair of silk shoes. If I were to live in the Bush, give me a wife as a companion who can ride well, leap over a ditch, walk beside me when I go forth gun in hand, for a shot at the kangaroos. But I dare not go on with the list of a Bush husband's requisites. This change, however, serves, for various reasons, to quicken my desire of return. Ten years have now elapsed, and I have already obtained a much larger fortune than I had calculated to make. Sorely to Guy's honest grief, I therefore wound up our affairs, and dissolved partnership; for he had decided to pass his life in the colony—and with his pretty wife, who has grown very fond of him, I don't wonder at it. Guy takes my share of the station and stock off my hand; and, all accounts squared between us, I bid farewell to the Bush. Despite all the motives that drew my heart homeward, it was not without participation in the sorrow of my old companions, that I took leave of those I might never see again on this side the grave. The meanest man in my employ had grown a friend; and when those hard hands grasped mine, and from many a breast that once had waged fierce war

with the world, came the soft blessing to the Homeward-bound—with a tender thought for the Old England, that had been but a harsh step-mother to them.

I felt a choking sensation, which I suspect is little known to the friendships of Mayfair and St. James's. I was forced to get off with a few broken words, when I had meant to part with a long speech: perhaps the broken words pleased the audience better. Spurring away, I gained a little eminence and looked back. There were the poor faithful fellows gathered in a ring, watching me—their hats off—their hands shading their eyes from the sun. And Guy had thrown himself on the ground, and I heard his loud sobs distinctly. His wife was leaning over his shoulder, trying to soothe. Forgive him, fair helpmate, you will be all in the world to him—to-morrow! and the blue-eyed sister, where was she? Had she no tears for the rough friend who laughed at the silk shoes, and taught her how to hold the reins, and never fear that the old pony would run away with her? What matter?—if the tears were shed, they were hidden tears. No shame in them, fair Ellen!—since then, thou hast wept happy tears over thy first-born—those tears have long ago washed away all bitterness in the innocent memories of a girl's first fancy.

CHAPTER VI.

DATED FROM ADELAIDE.

IMAGINE my wonder—Uncle Jack has just been with me, and—but hear the dialogue—

UNCLE JACK.—So you are positively going back to that smoky, fusty, old England, just when you are on your high road to a plumb. A plumb, sir, at least! They all say there is not a more rising young man in the colony. I think Bullion would take you into partnership. What are you in such a hurry for?

PISISTRATUS.—To see my father and mother, and Uncle Roland, and——(was about to name some one else, but stops). You see, my dear uncle, I came out solely with the idea of repairing my father's losses, in that unfortunate speculation of *The Capitalist*.

UNCLE JACK (coughs and ejaculates).—That villain Peck!

PISISTRATUS.—And to have a few thousands to invest in poor Roland's acres. The object is achieved: why should I stay?

UNCLE JACK.—A few paltry thousands, when in twenty years more, at the farthest, you would wallow in gold!

PISISTRATUS.—A man learns in the Bush how happy life can be with plenty of employment and very little money. I shall practise that lesson in England.

UNCLE JACK.—Your mind's made up?

PISISTRATUS.—And my place in the ship taken.

UNCLE JACK.—Then there's no more to be said. (Hums, haws, and examines his nails—filbert nails, not a speck on them. Then suddenly, and jerking up his head)—That *Capitalist!* it has been on my conscience, nephew, ever since; and, somehow or other, since I have abandoned the cause of my fellow-creatures, I think I have cared more for my relations.

PISISTRATUS (smiling as he remembers his father's shrewd predictions thereon).—Naturally, my dear uncle: any child who has thrown a stone into a pond knows that a circle disappears as it widens.

UNCLE JACK.—Very true—I shall make a note of that, applicable to my next speech, in defence of what they call the "land monopoly." Thank you—stone—circle! (Jots down notes in his pocket-book.) But, to return to the point: I am well off now—I have neither wife nor child; and I feel that I ought to bear my share in your father's loss: it was our joint speculation. And your father, good dear Austin! paid my debts into the bargain. And how cheering the punch was that night, when your mother wanted to scold poor Jack! And the £300 Austin lent me when I left him: nephew, that was the remaking of me—the acorn of the oak I have planted. So here they are (added Uncle Jack, with a heroical effort—and he extracted from the pocket-book bills for a sum between three and four thousand pounds). There, it is done; and I shall sleep better for it! (With that Uncle Jack got up, and bolted out of the room.)

Ought I to take the money? Why, I think yes!—it is but fair. Jack must be really rich, and can well spare the money; besides, if he wants it again, I know my father will let him have it. And, indeed, Jack caused the loss of

the whole sum lost on *The Capitalist*, etc.; and this is not quite the half of what my father paid away. But is it not fine in Uncle Jack! Well, my father was quite right in his milder estimate of Jack's scalene conformation, and it is hard to judge of a man when he is needy and down in the world. When one grafts one's ideas on one's neighbor's money, they are certainly not so grand as when they spring from one's own.

UNCLE JACK (popping his head into the room).—And, you see, you can double that money if you will just leave it in my hands for a couple of years—you have no notion what I shall make of the Tibbets' Wheal! Did I tell you?—the German was quite right—I have been offered already seven times the sum which I gave for the land. But I am now looking out for a Company: let me put you down for shares to the amount at least of those trumpery bills. Cent per cent—I guarantee cent per cent! (And Uncle Jack stretches out those famous smooth hands of his, with a tremulous motion of the ten eloquent fingers.)

PISISTRATUS.—Ah! my dear uncle, if you repent—

UNCLE JACK.—Repent! when I offer you cent per cent, on my personal guarantee!

PISISTRATUS (carefully putting the bills into his breast coat pocket).—Then, if you don't repent, my dear uncle, allow me to shake you by the hand, and say that I will not consent to lessen my esteem and admiration for the high principle which prompts this restitution, by confounding it with trading associations of loans, interests, and copper mines. And, you see, since this sum is paid to my father, I have no right to invest it without his permission.

UNCLE JACK (with emotion). — "Esteem, admiration, high principle!"—these are pleasant words, from you, nephew. (Then shaking his head and smiling)—You sly dog! you are quite right: get the bills cashed at once. And hark ye, sir, just keep out of my way, will you? and don't let me coax from you a farthing. (Uncle Jack slams the door and rushes out. Pisistratus draws the bills warily from his pocket, half-suspecting they must already have turned into withered leaves, like fairy money; slowly convinces himself that the bills are good bills; and, by lively gestures, testifies his delight and astonishment.) *Scene changes.*

PART EIGHTEENTH.

CHAPTER I.

ADIEU, thou beautiful land! Canaan of the exiles, and Ararat to many a shattered Ark! Fair cradle of a race for whom the unbounded heritage of a future, that no sage can conjecture, no prophet divine, lies afar in the golden promise-light of Time!—destined, perchance, from the sins and sorrows of a civilization struggling with its own elements of decay, to renew the youth of the world, and transmit the great soul of England through the cycles of Infinite Change. All climates that can best ripen the products of earth, or form into various character and temper the different families of man, "rain influences" from the heaven, that smiles so benignly on those who had once shrunk, ragged, from the wind, or scowled on the thankless sun. Here, the hardy air of the chill Mother Isle, there the mild warmth of Italian autumns, or the breathless glow of the tropics. And with the beams of every climate, glides subtle HOPE. Of her there, it may be said, as of Light itself, in those exquisite lines of a neglected poet—

"Through the soft ways of heaven, and air, and sea,
Which open all their pores to thee;
Like a clear river thou dost glide—
* * * * *
All the world's bravery that delights our eyes,
Is but thy several liveries;
Thou the rich dye on them bestowest;
Thy nimble pencil paints the landscape as thou goest."*

Adieu, my kind nurse and sweet foster-mother!—a long and a last adieu! Never had I left thee but for that louder voice of Nature which calls the child to the parent, and woos us from the labors we love the best by the chime in the Sabbath-bells of Home.

No one can tell how dear the memory of that wild Bush life becomes to him who has tried it with a *fitting spirit*. How often it haunts him in the commonplace of more civilized scenes! Its dangers, its risks, its sense of animal health, its bursts of adventure, its intervals of careless repose:—the fierce gallop through a very sea of wide rolling plains—the still saunter, at night, through woods never changing their leaves; with the moon, clear as sunshine, stealing slant through their clusters of flowers. With what an effort we reconcile ourselves to the trite cares and vexed pleasures, "the quotidian ague of frigid impertinences," to which we return! How strong and black stands my pencil-mark in this passage of the poet from whom I have just quoted before!—

"We are here among the vast and noble scenes of Nature—we are there among the pitiful shifts of policy; we walk here, in the light and open ways of the Divine Bounty—we grope there, in the dark and confused labyrinth of human malice." *

But I weary you, reader. The New World vanishes—now a line—now a speck; let us turn away, with the face to the Old.

Amongst my fellow-passengers, how many there are returning home disgusted, disappointed, impoverished, ruined, throwing themselves again on those unsuspecting poor friends, who thought they had done with the luckless good-for-naughts for ever. For, don't let me deceive thee, reader, into supposing that every adventurer to Australia has the luck of Pisistratus. Indeed, though the poor laborer, and especially the poor operative from London and the great trading towns (who has generally more of the quick knack of learning—the

* Cowley's *Ode to Light*.

* Cowley on *Town and Country*. (Discourse on Agriculture.)

adaptable faculty—required in a new colony, than the simple agricultural laborer), are pretty sure to succeed, the class to which I belong is one in which failures are numerous, and success the exception—I mean young men with scholastic education and the habits of gentlemen—with small capital and sanguine hopes. But this, in ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is not the fault of the colony, but of the emigrants. It requires, not so much intellect as a peculiar turn of intellect, and a fortunate combination of physical qualities, easy temper, and quick mother-wit, to make a small capitalist a prosperous Bushman.* And if you could see the sharks that swim round a man just dropped at Adelaide or Sydney, with one or two thousand pounds in his pocket! Hurry out of the towns as fast as you can, my young emigrant; turn a deaf ear, for the present at least, to all jobbers and speculators; make friends with some practised old Bushman; spend several months at his station before you hazard your capital; take with you a temper to bear everything and sigh for nothing; put your whole heart in what you are about; never call upon Hercules when your cart sticks in the rut, and, whether you feed sheep or breed cattle, your success is but a question of time.

But, whatever I owed to nature, I owed also something to fortune. I bought my sheep at little more than 7s. each. When I left, none were worth less than 15s., and the fat sheep were worth £1. † I had an excellent shepherd, and my whole care, night and day, was the improvement of the flock. I was fortunate, too, in entering Australia before the system miscalled "The Wakefield" * had diminished the supply of labor, and raised the price of land. When the change came (like most of those with large allotments and surplus capital), it greatly increased the value of my own property, though at the cost of a terrible blow on the general interests of the colony. I was lucky, too, in the additional venture of a cattle station, and in the breed of horses and herds which, in the five years devoted to that branch establishment, trebled the sum invested therein, exclusive of the advantageous sale of the station.† I was lucky, also, as I have stated, in the purchase and resale of lands, at Uncle Jack's recommendation. And, lastly, I left in time, and escaped a very disastrous crisis in colonial affairs, which I take the liberty of attributing entirely to the mischievous crotchets of theorists at home,

* How true are the following remarks:—

"Action is the first great requisite of a colonist (that is, a pastoral or agricultural settler). With a young man, the tone of his mind is more important than his previous pursuits. I have known men of an active, energetic, contented disposition, with a good flow of animal spirits, who had been bred in luxury and refinement, succeed better than men bred as farmers, who were always hankering after bread and beer, and market ordinaries of Old England. * * * To be dreaming when you should be looking after your cattle is a terrible drawback. * * * There are certain persons who, too lazy and too extravagant to succeed in Europe, sail for Australia under the idea that fortunes are to be made there by a sort of legerdemain, spend or lose their capital in a very short space of time, and return to England to abuse the place, the people, and everything connected with colonization."—*Sidney's Australian Handbook*—admirable for its wisdom and compactness.

† Lest this seem an exaggeration I venture to annex an extract from a MS. letter to the author from Mr. George Blakeston Wilkinson, author of *South Australia*.

"I will instance the case of one person, who had been a farmer in England, and emigrated with about £2,000 about seven years since. On his arrival, he found that the prices of sheep had fallen from about 30*s*. to 5*s*. or 6*s*. per head, and he bought some well-bred flocks at these prices. He was fortunate in obtaining a good and extensive *run*, and he devoted the whole of his time to improving his flocks, and encouraged his shepherds by rewards; so that, in about four years, his original number of sheep had increased from 2,500 (which cost him £700) to 7,000; and the breed and wool were also so much improved, that he could obtain £1 per head for 2,000 fat sheep, and 15*s*. per head for the other 5,000, and this at a time when the general price of sheep was from 10*s*. to 16*s*. This alone increased his original capital, invested in sheep, from £700 to £5,700. The profits from the wool paid the whole of his expenses and wages for his men."

* I felt sure from the first, that the system called 'The Wakefield" could never fairly represent the ideas, of Mr. Wakefield himself, whose singular breadth of understanding, and various knowledge of mankind, belied the notion that fathered on him the clumsy execution of a theory wholly inapplicable to a social state like Australia. I am glad to see that he has vindicated himself from the discreditable paternity. But I grieve to find that he still clings to one cardinal error of the system, in the discouragement of small holdings, and that he evades, more ingeniously than ingenuously, the important question—"What should be the minimum price of land?"

† "The profits of cattle-farming are smaller than those of the sheep-owner (if the latter have good luck, for much depends upon that), but cattle-farming is much more safe as a speculation, and less care, knowledge, and management are required. £2,000, laid out on 700 head of cattle, if good runs be procured, might increase the capital in five years from £2,000 to £6,000, besides enabling the owner to maintain himself, pay wages, etc."—*MS. letter from G. B. Wilkinson.*

who want to set all clocks by Greenwich time, forgetting that it is morning in one part of the world at the time they are tolling the curfew in the other.

CHAPTER II.

LONDON once more! How strange, lone, and savage I feel in the streets! I am ashamed to have so much health and strength, when I look at those slim forms, stooping backs, and pale faces. I pick my way through the crowd with the merciful timidity of a good natured giant. I am afraid of jostling against a man, for fear the collision should kill him. I get out of the way of a thread-paper clerk, and 'tis a wonder I am not run over by the omnibuses; —I feel as if I could run over them! I perceive, too, that there is something outlandish, peregrinate, and lawless about me. Beau Brummell would certainly have denied me all pretension to the simple air of a gentleman, for every third passenger turns back to look at me. I retreat to my hotel—send for boot-maker, hatter, tailor, and hair-cutter. I humanize myself from head to foot. Even Ulysses is obliged to have recourse to the arts of Minerva, and, to speak unmetaphorically, "smarten himself up," before the faithful Penelope condescends to acknowledge him.

The artificers promise all despatch. Meanwhile, I hasten to re-make acquaintance with my mother country over files of the *Times*, *Post*, *Chronicle*, and *Herald*. Nothing comes amiss to me, but articles on Australia; from those I turn aside with the true pshaw-supercilious of your practical man.

No more are leaders filled with praise and blame of Trevanion. "Percy's spur is cold." Lord Ulverstone figures only in the *Court Circular*, or "*Fashionable Movements*." Lord Ulverstone entertains a royal duke at dinner, or dines in turn with a royal duke, or has come to town, or gone out of it. At most (faint Platonic reminiscence of the former life), Lord Ulverstone says in the House of Lords a few words on some question, not a party one; and on which (though affecting perhaps the interests of some few thousands, or millions, as the case may be) men speak without "hears," and are inaudible in the gallery; or Lord Ulverstone takes the chair at an agricultural meeting, or returns thanks when his health is drunk at a dinner at Guildhall. But the daughter rises as the father sets, though over a very different kind of world.

"First ball of the season at Castleton House!" Long description of the rooms and the company; above all, of the hostess. Lines on the Marchioness of Castleton's picture in the "Book of Beauty," by the Hon. Fitzroy Fiddledum, beginning with "Art thou an angel from," etc.—a paragraph that pleased me more, on "Lady Castleton's Infant School at Raby Park;" then again—"Lady Castleton, the new patroness at Almack's;" a criticism more rapturous than ever gladdened living poet, on Lady Castleton's superb diamond stomacher, just reset by Storr and Mortimer; Westmacott's bust of Lady Castleton; Landseer's picture of Lady Castleton and her children, in the costume of the olden time. Not a month in that long file of the *Morning Post* but what Lady Castleton shone forth from the rest of womankind—

"——Velut inter ignes
Luna minores."

The blood mounted to my cheek. Was it to this splendid constellation in the patrician heaven that my obscure, portionless youth had dared to lift its presumptuous eyes? But what is this? "Indian Intelligence—Skilful retreat of the Sepoys under Captain de Caxton!" A captain already—what is the date of the newspaper?—three months ago. The leading article quotes the name with high praise. Is there no leaven of envy amidst the joy at my heart? How obscure has been my career —how laurelless my poor battle with adverse fortune! Fie, Pisistratus! I am ashamed of thee. Has this accursed Old World, with its feverish rivalries, diseased thee already? Get thee home, quick, to the arms of thy mother, the embrace of thy father—hear Roland's low blessing, that thou hast helped to minister to the very fame of that son. If thou wilt have ambition, take it, not soiled and foul with the mire of London. Let it spring fresh and hardy in the calm air of wisdom; and fed, as with dews, by the loving charities of Home.

CHAPTER III.

It was at sunset that I stole through the ruined courtyard, having left my chaise at the foot of the hill below. Though they whom I came to seek knew that I had arrived in England, they did not, from my letter, expect me till the next day. I had stolen a march upon them; and now, in spite of all the impatience which had urged me thither, I was afraid to enter—afraid to see the change more than ten years had made in those forms, for which, in my memory, Time had stood still. And Roland had, even when we parted, grown old before his time. Then, my father was in the meridian of life, now he had approached to the decline. And my mother, whom I remembered so fair, as if the freshness of her own heart had preserved the soft bloom to the cheek—I could not bear to think that she was no longer young. Blanche, too, whom I had left a child—Blanche, my constant correspondent during those long years of exile, in letters crossed and re-crossed, with all the small details that make the eloquence of letter-writing, so that in those epistles I had seen her mind gradually grow up in harmony with the very characters; at first vague and infantine—then somewhat stiff with the first graces of running hand, then dashing off, free and facile; and, for the last year before I left, so formed, yet so airy—so regular, yet so unconscious of effort—though, in truth, as the caligraphy had become thus matured, I had been half vexed and half pleased to perceive a certain reserve creeping over the style—wishes for my return less expressed from herself than as messages from others; words of the old child-like familiarity repressed; and "Dearest Sisty" abandoned for the cold form of "Dear Cousin." Those letters, coming to me in a spot where maiden and love had been as myths of the bygone, phantasms and *eidola*, only vouchsafed to the visions of fancy, had, by little and little, crept into secret corners of my heart; and out of the wrecks of a former romance, solitude and reverie had gone far to build up the fairy domes of a romance yet to come. My mother's letters had never omitted to make mention of Blanche—of her forethought and tender activity, of her warm heart and sweet temper—and, in many a little home picture, presented her image where I would fain have placed it, not "crystal seeing," but joining my mother in charitabte visits to the village, instructing the young, and tending on the old, or teaching herself to illuminate, from an old missal in my father's collection, that she might surprise my uncle with a new genealogical table, with all shields and quarterings, blazoned *or sable*, and *argent;* or flitting round my father where he sat, and watching when he looked round for some book he was too lazy to rise for. Blanche had made a new catalogue, and got it by heart, and knew at once from what corner of the Heraclea to summon the ghost. On all these little traits had my mother been eulogistically minute; but somehow or other she had never said, at least for the last two years, whether Blanche was pretty or plain. That was a sad omission. I had longed just to ask that simple question, or to imply it delicately and diplomatically; but, I know not why, I never dared—for Blanche would have been sure to have read the letter, and what business was it of mine? And if she *was* ugly, what question more awkward both to put and to answer? Now in childhood, Blanche had just one of those faces that might become very lovely in youth, and would yet quite justify the suspicion that it might become gryphonesque, witch-like, and grim. Yes, Blanche, it is perfectly true! If those large, serious black eyes took a fierce light, instead of a tender—if that nose, which seemed then undecided whether to be straight or to be aquiline, arched off in the latter direction, and assumed the martial, Roman, and imperative character of Roland's manly proboscis—if that face, in childhood too thin, left the blushes of youth to take refuge on two salient peaks by the temples (Cumberland air, too, is famous for the growth of the cheekbone!)—if all that should happen, and it very well might, then, O Blanche, I wish thou hadst never written me those letters; and I might have done wiser things than steel my heart so obdurately to pretty Ellen Bolding's blue eyes and silk shoes. Now, combining together all these doubts and apprehensions, wonder not, O reader, why I stole so stealthily through the ruined courtyard, crept round to the other side of the tower, gazed wistfully on the sun setting slant, on the high casements of the hall (too high, alas! to look within), and shrunk yet to enter; —doing battle, as it were, with my heart.

Steps!—one's sense of hearing grows so quick in the Bushland!—steps, though as light as ever brushed the dew from the harebell! I crept under the shadow of the huge buttress mantled with ivy. A form comes from the little door at an angle in the ruins—a woman's form. Is it my mother? It is too tall, and the step is more bounding. It winds round the building, it turns to look back, and a sweet voice—a voice strange, yet familiar, calls, tender but chiding, to a truant that lags behind. Poor Juba! he is trailing his long ears on the ground; he is evidently much disturbed in his mind; now he stands still, his nose in the air. Poor Juba! I left thee so slim and so nimble,

> "Thy form, that was fashioned as light as a fay's,
> Has assumed a proportion more round;"

years have sobered thee strangely, and made thee obese and Primmins-like. They have taken too good care of thy creature comforts, O sensual Mauritanian! still, in that mystic intelligence we call instinct, thou art chasing something that years have not swept from thy memory. Thou art deaf to thy lady's voice, however tender and chiding. That's right, come near—nearer—my cousin Blanche; let me have a fair look at thee. Plague take the dog! he flies off from her: he has found the scent, he is making up to the buttress! Now—pounce—he is caught!—whining ungallant discontent: Shall I not yet see the face! it is buried in Juba's black curls. Kisses too? Wicked Blanche! to waste on a dumb animal what, I heartily hope, many a good Christian would be exceedingly glad of! Juba struggles in vain, and is borne off! I don't think that those eyes can have taken the fierce turn, and Roland's eagle nose can never go with that voice, which has the coo of the dove.

I leave my hiding place, and steal after the Voice, and its owner. Where can she be going? Not far. She springs up the hill whereon the lords of the castle once administered justice,—that hill which commands the land far and wide, and from which can be last caught the glimpse of the westering sun. How gracefully still is that attitude of wistful repose! Into what delicate curves do form and drapery harmoniously flow! How softly distinct stands the little image against the purple hues of the sky! Then again comes the sweet voice, gay and carolling as a bird's—now in snatches of song, now in playful appeals to that dull, four-footed friend. She is telling him something that must make the black ears stand on end, for I just catch the words, "He is coming," and "home."

I cannot see the sun set where I lurk in my ambush, amidst the brake and the ruins; but I *feel* that the orb has passed from the landscape, in the fresher air of the twilight, in the deeper silence of eve. Lo! Hesper comes forth; at his signal, star after star, come the hosts—

> "Ch'eran con lui, quando l'amor divino,
> Mosse da primà quelle cose belle!"

And the sweet voice is hushed.

Then slowly the watcher descends the hill on the opposite side—the form escapes from my view. What charm has gone from the twilight? See, again, where the step steals through the ruins and along the desolate court. Ah! deep and true heart, do I divine the remembrance that leads thee? I pass through the wicket, down the dell, skirt the laurels, and behold the face, looking up to the stars—the face which had nestled to my breast in the sorrow of parting years, long years ago: on the grave where we had sat, I the boy, thou the infant—there, O Blanche! is thy fair face—(fairer than the fondest dream that had gladdened my exile)—vouchsafed to my gaze!

"Blanche, my cousin!—again, again—soul with soul, amidst the dead! Look up, Blanche; it is I."

CHAPTER IV.

"Go in first and prepare them, dear Blanche; I will wait by the door. Leave it ajar, that I may see them."

Roland is leaning against the wall—old armor suspended over the gray head of the soldier. It is but a glance that I give to the dark cheek and high brow; no change there for the worse—no new sign of decay. Rather, if anything, Roland seems younger than when I left. Calm is the brow—no shame on it now, Roland; and the lips, once so compressed, smile with ease—no struggle now, Roland, "not to complain." A glance shows me all this.

"Papæ!" says my father, and I hear the

fall of a book, "I can't read a line. He is coming to-morrow !—to-morrow ! If we lived to the age of Methuselah, Kitty, we could never reconcile philosophy and man; that is, if the poor man's to be plagued with a good, affectionate son ! "

And my father gets up and walks to and fro. One minute more, father—one minute more—and I am on thy breast ! Time, too, has dealt gently with thee, as he doth with those for whom the wild passions and keen cares of the world never sharpen his scythe. The broad front looks more broad, for the locks are more scanty and thin; but still not a furrow.

Whence comes that short sigh !

"What is really the time, Blanche ? Did you look at the turret clock ? Well, just go and look again."

"Kitty," quoth my father, "you have not only asked what time it is thrice within the last ten minutes, but you have got my watch, and Roland's great chronometer, and the Dutch clock out of the kitchen, all before you, and they all concur in the same tale—to-day is not to-morrow."

"They are all wrong, I know," said my mother, with mild firmness; "and they've never gone right since *he* left."

Now out comes a letter—for I hear the rustle—and then a step glides towards the lamp; and the dear, gentle, womanly face—fair still, fair ever for me—fair as when it bent over my pillow, in childhood's first sickness, or when we threw flowers at each other on the lawn, at sunny noon ! And now Blanche is whispering; and now the flutter, the start, the cry,—"It is true ! it is true ! Your arms, mother. Close, close round my neck, as in the old time. Father ! Roland, too ! Oh, joy ! joy ! joy ! home again—home till death ! "

CHAPTER V.

From a dream of the Bushland, howling dingoes,* and the war-whoop of the wild men, I wake and see the sun shining in through the jasmine that Blanche herself has had trained round the window—old school books, neatly ranged round the wall—fishing rods, cricket-bats, foils, and the old-fashioned gun—and my mother seated by the bed-side—and Juba whining and scratching to get up. Had I taken thy murmured blessing, my mother, for the whoop of the blacks, and Juba's low whine for the howl of the dingoes ?

Then what days of calm exquisite delight ! —the interchange of heart with heart; what walks with Roland, and tales of him once our shame, now our pride; and the art with which the old man would lead those walks round by the village, that some favorite gossips might stop and ask, "What news of his brave young honor ? "

I strive to engage my uncle in my projects for the repair of the ruins—for the culture of those wide bogs and moorlands: why is it that he turns away and looks down embarrassed ? Ah, I guess !—his true heir now is restored to him. He cannot consent that I should invest this dross, for which (the Great Book once published) I have no other use, in the house and the lands that will pass to his son.

Neither would he suffer me so to invest even his son's fortune, the bulk of which I still hold in trust for that son. True, in his career, my cousin may require to have his money always forthcoming. But *I*, who have no career,—pooh ! these scruples will rob me of half the pleasure my years of toil were to purchase. I must contrive it somehow or other: what if he would let me house and moorland on a long improving lease ? Then, for the rest, there is a pretty little property to be sold close by, on which I can retire, when my cousin, as heir of the family, comes, perhaps with a wife, to reside at the Tower. I must consider of all this, and talk it over with Bolt, when my mind is at leisure from happiness to turn to such matters; meanwhile I fall back on my favorite proverb, —"*Where there's a will there's a way.*"

What smiles and tears, and laughter and careless prattle with my mother, and round-about questions from her, to know if I had never lost my heart in the Bush ? and evasive answers from me, to punish her for not letting out that Blanche was so charming. "I fancied Blanche had grown the image of her father, who has a fine martial head certainly, but not seen to advantage in petticoats ! How could you be so silent with a theme so attractive ? "

"Blanche made me promise."

Why, I wonder. Therewith I fell musing.

* *Dingoes*—the name given by Australian natives to the wild dogs.

What quiet delicious hours are spent with my father in his study, or by the pond, where he still feeds the carps, that have grown into Cyprinidian leviathans. The duck, alas! has departed this life—the only victim that the Grim King has carried off; so I mourn, but am resigned to that lenient composition of the great tribute to nature. I am sorry to say the Great Book has advanced but slowly—by no means yet fit for publication, for it is resolved that it shall not come out as first proposed, a part at a time, but *totus, teres, atque rotundus.* The matter has spread beyond its original compass; no less than five volumes—and those of the amplest—will contain the History of Human Error. However, we are far in the fourth, and one must not hurry Minerva.

My father is enchanted with Uncle Jack's "noble conduct," as he calls it; but he scolds me for taking the money, and doubts as to the propriety of returning it. In these matters my father is quite as Quixotical as Roland. I am forced to call in my mother as umpire between us, and she settles the matter at once by an appeal to feeling. "Ah, Austin! do you not humble me, if you are too proud to accept what is due to you from my brother!"

"*Velit, nolit, quod amica*," answered my father, taking off and rubbing his spectacles—"which means, Kitty, that when a man's married he has no will of his own. To think," added Mr. Caxton, musingly, "that in this world one cannot be sure of the simplest mathematical definition! You see, Pisistratus, that the angles of a triangle so decidedly scalene as your Uncle Jack's, may be equal to the angles of a right-angled triangle after all!" *

The long privation of books has quite restored all my appetite for them. How much I have to pick up!—what a compendious scheme of reading I and my father chalk out! I see enough to fill up all the leisure of life. But, somehow or other, Greek and Latin stand still: nothing charms me like Italian. Blanche and I are reading Metastasio, to the great indignation of my father, who calls it "rubbish," and wants to substitute Dante. I have no associations at present with the souls

> "Che son contenti
> Nel fuoco;"

I am already one of the "*beate gente.*" Yet, in spite of Metastasio, Blanche and I are not so intimate as cousins ought to be. If we are by accident alone, I become as silent as a Turk,—as formal as Sir Charles Grandison. I caught myself calling her *Miss* Blanche the other day.

I must not forget thee, honest Squills!—nor thy delight at my health and success; nor thy exclamation of pride (one hand on my pulse and the other griping hard the "ball" of my arm), "It all comes of my citrate of iron; nothing like it for children; it has an effect on the cerebral developments of hope and combativeness." Nor can I wholly omit mention of poor Mrs. Primmins, who still calls me "Master Sisty," and is breaking her heart that I will not wear the new flannel waistcoats she had such pleasure in making—"Young gentlemen just growing up are so apt to go off in a galloping 'sumption!" "She knew just such another as Master Sisty, when she lived at Torquay, who wasted away, and went out like a *snuff*, all because he would not wear flannel waistcoats." Therewith my mother looks grave, and says, "One can't take too much precaution."

Suddenly the whole neighborhood is thrown into commotion. Trevanion—I beg his pardon, Lord Ulverstone—is coming to settle for good at Compton. Fifty hands are employed daily in putting the grounds into hasty order. Fourgons, and wagons, and vans have disgorged all the necessaries a great man requires, where he means to eat, drink, and sleep; books, wines, pictures, furniture. I recognize my old patron still. He is in earnest, whatever he does. I meet my friend, his steward, who tells me that Lord Ulverstone finds his favorite seat, near London, too exposed to interruption; and moreover, that, as he has there completed all improvements that wealth and energy can effect, he has less occupation for agricultural pursuits, to which he has grown more and more partial, than on the wide and princely domain which has hitherto wanted the master's eye. "He is a bra' farmer, I know," quoth the steward, "so far as

* Not having again to advert to Uncle Jack, I may be pardoned for informing the reader, by way of annotation, that he continues to prosper surprisingly in Australia, though the Tibbets' Wheal stands still for want of workmen. Despite of a few ups and downs, I have had no fear of his success until this year (1849), when I tremble to think what effect the discovery of the gold mines in California may have on his lively imagination. If thou escapest that snare, Uncle Jack, *res age, tutus eris*,—thou art safe for life!

the theory goes; but I don't think we in the north want great lords to teach us how to follow the pleugh." The steward's sense of dignity is hurt; but he is an honest fellow, and really glad to see the family come to settle in the old place.

They have arrived, and with them the Castletons, and a whole *posse comitatus* of guests. The county paper is full of fine names.

"What on earth did Lord Ulverstone mean by pretending to get out of the way of troublesome visitors?"

"My dear Pisistratus," answered my farther to that exclamation, "it is not the visitors who come but the visitors who stay away, that most trouble the repose of a retired minister. In all the procession, he sees but the images of Brutus and Cassius—that are *not* there! And depend on it, also, a retirement so near London did not make noise enough. You see, a retiring statesman is like that fine carp—the farther he leaps from the water, the greater splash he makes in falling into the weeds! But," added Mr. Caxton, in a repentant tone, "this jesting does not become us; and, if I indulged it, it is only because I am heartily glad that Trevanion is likely now to find out his true vocation. And as soon as the fine people he brings with him have left him alone in his library, I trust he will settle to that vocation and be happier than he has been yet."

"And that vocation, sir, is—?"

"Metaphysics!" said my father. "He will be quite at home in puzzling over Berkeley, and considering whether the Speaker's chair, and the official red boxes, were really things whose ideas of figure, extension, and hardness, were all in the mind. It will be a great consolation to him to agree with Berkeley, and to find that he has only been baffled by inmaterial phantasma!"

My father was quite right. The repining, subtle, truth-weighing Trevanion, plagued by his conscience into seeing all sides of a question (for the least question has more than two sides, and is hexagonal at least), was much more fitted to discover the origin of ideas than to convince Cabinets and Nations that two and two make four—a proposition on which he himself would have agreed with Abraham Tucker, where that most ingenious and suggestive of all English metapysicians observes, "Well, persuaded as I am that two and two make four, if I were to meet with a person of credit, candor, and understanding, who should sincerely call it in question, I would give him a hearing; for I am not more certain of that than of the whole being greater than a part. And yet I could myself suggest *some considerations that might seem to controvert this point.*"* I can so well imagine Trevanion listening to "some person of credit, candor, and understanding," in disproof of that vulgar proposition that twice two make four! But the news of this arrival, including that of Lady Castleton, disturbed me greatly, and I took to long wanderings alone. In one of these rambles, they all called at the Tower—Lord and Lady Ulverstone, the Castletons and their children. I escaped the visit; and on my return home, there was a certain delicacy respecting old associations that restrained much talk, before me, on so momentous an event. Roland, like me, had kept out of the way. Blanche, poor child, ignorant of the antecedents, was the most communicative. And the especial theme she selected—was the grace and beauty of Lady Castleton!

A pressing invitation to spend some days at the castle had been cordially given to all. It was accepted only by myself: I wrote word that I would come.

Yes; I longed to prove the strength of my own self-conquest, and accurately test the nature of the feelings that had disturbed me. That any sentiment which could be called love remained for Lady Castleton, the wife of another, and that other a man with so many claims on my affections as her lord, I held as a moral impossibility. But, with all those lively impressions of early youth still engraved on my heart—impressions of the image of Fanny Trevanion as the fairest and brightest of human beings—could I feel free to love again? Could I seek to woo, and rivet to myself forever the entire and virgin affections of another, while there was a possibility that I might compare and regret? No; either I must feel that, if Fanny were again single—could be mine without obstacle, human or divine—she had ceased to be the one I would single out of the world; or, though re-

* *Light of Nature—chapter on Judgment.*—See the very ingenious illustration of doubt, "whether the part is always greater than the whole"—taken from time, or rather eternity.

garding love as the dead, I would be faithful to its memory and its ashes. My mother sighed, and looked fluttered and uneasy all the morning of the day on which I was to repair to Compton. She even seemed cross, for about the third time in her life, and paid no compliment to Mr. Stultz, when my shooting-jacket was exchanged for a black frock, which that artist had pronounced to be "splendid;" neither did she honor me with any of those little attentions to the contents of my portmanteau, and the perfect "getting up" of my white waistcoats and cravats, which made her natural instincts on such memorable occasions. There was also a sort of querulous, pitying tenderness in her tone, when she spoke to Blanche, which was quite pathetic; though, fortunately, its cause remained dark and impenetrable to the innocent comprehension of one who could not see where the past filled the urns of the future at the fountain of life. My father understood me better, shook me by the hand as I got into the chaise, and muttered, out of Seneca—

"Non tanquam transfuga, sed tanquam explorator."
"Not to desert, but examine."

Quite right.

CHAPTER VI.

AGREEABLY to the usual custom in great houses, as soon as I arrived at Compton, I was conducted to my room, to adjust my toilet, or compose my spirits by solitude:—it wanted an hour to dinner. I had not, however, been thus left ten minutes, before the door opened, and Trevanion himself (as I would fain still call him) stood before me. Most cordial were his greeting and welcome; and, seating himself by my side, he continued to converse, in his peculiar way—bluntly eloquent, and carelessly learned—till the half-hour bell rang. He talked on Australia, the Wakefield system—cattle—books, his trouble in arranging his library—his schemes for improving his property, and embellishing his grounds—his delight to find my father look so well—his determination to see a great deal of him, whether his old college friend would or not. He talked, in short, of everything except politics, and his own past career—showing only his soreness in that silence. But (independently of the mere work of time) he looked yet more worn and jaded in his leisure than he had done in the full tide of business; and his former abrupt quickness of manner now seemed to partake of feverish excitement. I hoped that my father *would* see much of him, for I felt that the weary mind wanted soothing.

Just as the second bell rang, I entered the drawing-room. There were at least twenty guests present—each guest, no doubt, some planet of fashion or fame, with satellites of its own. But I saw only two forms distinctly; first, Lord Castleton, conspicuous with star and garter—somewhat ampler and portlier in proportions, and with a frank dash of gray in the silky waves of his hair; but still as pre-eminent as ever for that beauty—the charm of which depends less than any other upon youth—arising, as it does, from a felicitous combination of bearing and manner, and that exquisite suavity of expression which steals into the heart, and pleases so much that it becomes a satisfaction to admire! Of Lord Castleton, indeed, it might be said, as of Alcibiades, "that he was beautiful at every age." I felt my breath come thick, and a mist passed before my eyes, as Lord Castleton led me through the crowd, and the radiant vision of Fanny Trevanion, how altered—and how dazzling!—burst upon me.

I felt the light touch of that hand of snow; but no guilty thrill shot through my veins. I heard the voice, musical as ever—lower than it was once, and more subdued in its key, but steadfast and untremulous—it was no longer the voice that made "my soul plant itself in the ears."* The event was over, and I knew that the dream had fled from the waking world for ever.

"Another old friend!" as Lady Ulverstone came forth from a little group of children, leading one fine boy of nine years old, while one, two or three years younger, clung to her gown. "Another old friend!—and," added Lady Ulverstone, after the first kind greetings, "two new ones when the old are gone." The slight melancholy left the voice, as, after presenting to me the little viscount, she drew forward the more bashful Lord Albert, who indeed had something of his grandsire's and namesake's look of refined intelligence in his brow and eyes.

* Sir Philip Sidney.

The watchful tact of Lord Castleton was quick in terminating whatever embarrassment might belong to these introductions, as, leaning lightly on my arm, he drew me forward, and presented me to the guests more immediately in our neighborhood, who seemed by their earnest cordiality to have been already prepared for the introduction.

Dinner was now announced, and I welcomed that sense of relief and segregation with which one settles into one's own "particular" chair at your large miscellaneous entertainment.

I stayed three days at that house. How truly had Trevanion said that Fanny would make "an excellent great lady." What perfect harmony between her manners and her position; just retaining enough of the girl's seductive gaiety and bewitching desire to please, to soften the new dignity of bearing she had unconsciously assumed—less, after all, as great lady, than as wife and mother: with a fine breeding, perhaps a little languid and artificial, as compared with her lord's—which sprang, fresh and healthful, wholly from nature—but still so void of all the chill of condescension, or the subtle impertinence that belongs to that order of the inferior *noblesse*, which boasts the name of "exclusives;" with what grace, void of prudery, she took the adulation of the flutterers, turning from them to her children, or escaping lightly to Lord Castleton, with an ease that drew round her at once the protection of hearth and home.

And certainly Lady Castleton was more incontestably beautiful than Fanny Trevanion had been.

All this I acknowledged, not with a sigh and a pang, but with a pure feeling of pride and delight. I might have loved madly and presumptuously, as boys will do; but I had loved worthily—the love left no blush on my manhood; and Fanny's very happiness was my perfect and total cure of every wound in my heart not quite scarred over before. Had she been discontented, sorrowful, without joy in the ties she had formed, there might have been more danger that I should brood over the past, and regret the loss of its idol. Here there was none. And the very improvement in her beauty had so altered its character—*so* altered—that Fanny Trevanion and Lady Castleton seemed two persons. And, thus observing and listening to her, I could now dispassionately perceive such differences in our nature as seemed to justify Trevanion's assertion, which once struck me as so monstrous, "that we should not have been happy had fate permitted our union." Pure-hearted and simple though she remained in the artificial world, still that world was her element; its interests occupied her; its talk, though just chastened from scandal, flowed from her lips. To borrow the words of a man who was himself a courtier, and one so distinguished that he could afford to sneer at Chesterfield,* "*She* had the routine of that style of conversation which is a sort of gold leaf, that is a great embellishment where it is joined to anything else." I will not add, "but makes a very poor figure by itself,"—for *that* Lady Castleton's conversation certainly did not do—perhaps, indeed, because it was not "by itself"—and the gold leaf was all the better for being thin, since it could not cover even the surface of the sweet and amiable nature over which it was spread. Still this was not the mind in which now, in maturer experience, I would seek to find sympathy with manly action, or companionship in the charms of intellectual leisure.

There was about this same beautiful favorite of nature and fortune a certain helplessness, which had even its grace in that high station, and which, perhaps, tended to insure her domestic peace, for it served to attach her to those who had won influence over her, and was happily accompanied by a most affectionate disposition. But still, if less favored by circumstances, less sheltered from every wind that could visit her too roughly—if, as the wife of a man of inferior rank, she had failed of that high seat and silken canopy reserved for the spoiled darlings of fortune—that helplessness might have become querulous. I thought of poor Ellen Bolding and her silken shoes. Fanny Trevanion seemed to have come into the world with silk shoes—not to walk where there was a stone or a brier! I heard something, in the gossip of those around, that confirmed this view of Lady Castleton's character, while it deepened my admiration of her lord, and showed me how wise had been her choice, and how resolutely he had prepared himself to vindicate his own. One evening, as I was sitting, a little apart

* Lord Hervey's *Memoirs of George II.*

from the rest, with two men of the London world, to whose talk—for it ran upon the *on-dits* and anecdotes of a region long strange to me—I was a silent but amused listener; one of the two said—"Well, I don't know anywhere a more excellent creature than Lady Castleton; so fond of her children—and her tone to Castleton so exactly what it ought to be—so affectionate, and yet, as it were, respectful. And the more credit to her, if, as they say, she was not in love with him when she married (to be sure, handsome as he is, he is twice her age !). And no woman could have been more flattered and courted by Lotharios and lady-killers than Lady Castleton has been. I confess, to my shame, that Castleton's luck puzzles me, for it is rather an exception to my general experience."

"My dear * * *," said the other, who was one of those wise men of pleasure, who occasionally startle us into wondering how they came to be so clever, and yet rest contented with mere drawing-room celebrity—men who seem always idle, yet appear to have read everything; always indifferent to what passes before them, yet who know the character and divine the secrets of everybody—"my dear * * *," said the gentleman, "you would not be puzzled if you had studied Lord Castleton, instead of her ladyship. Of all the conquests ever made by Sedley Beaudesert, when the two fairest dames of the Faubourg are said to have fought for his smiles, in the *Bois de Boulogne*—no conquest ever cost him such pains, or so tasked his knowledge of women, as that of his wife after marriage ! He was not satisfied with her hand, he was resolved to have her whole heart, 'one entire and perfect chrysolite;' and he has succeeded ! Never was husband so watchful, and so little jealous—never one who confided so generously in all that was best in his wife, yet was so alert in protecting and guarding her, wherever she was weakest ! When, in the second year of marriage, that dangerous German Prince Von Leibenfels attached himself so perseveringly to Lady Castleton, and the scandal-mongers pricked up their ears, in hopes of a victim, I watched Castleton with as much interest as if I had been looking over Deschappelles playing at chess. You never saw anything so masterly: he pitted himself against his highness with the cool confidence, not of a blind spouse, but a fortunate rival. He surpassed him in the delicacy of his attentions, he outshone him by his careless magnificence. Leibenfels had the impertinence to send Lady Castleton a bouquet of some rare flowers just in fashion. Castleton, an hour before, had filled her whole balcony with the same costly exotics, as if they were too common for nosegays, and only just worthy to bloom for her a day. Young and really accomplished as Leibenfels is, Castleton eclipsed him by his grace, and fooled him with his wit; he laid little plots to turn his moustache and guitar into ridicule; he seduced him into a hunt with the buckhounds (though Castleton himself had not hunted before, since he was thirty), and drew him, spluttering German oaths, out of the slough of a ditch; he made him the laughter of the clubs: he put him fairly out of fashion—and all with such suavity and politeness, and bland sense of superiority, that it was the finest piece of high comedy you ever beheld. The poor prince, who had been coxcomb enough to lay a bet with a Frenchman as to his success with the English in general, and Lady Castleton in particular, went away with a face as long as Don Quixote's. If you had but seen him at S—— House, the night before he took leave of the island, and his comical grimace when Castleton offered him a pinch of the Beaudesert mixture ! No ! the fact is, that Castleton made it the object of his existence, the masterpiece of his art, to secure to himself a happy home, and the entire possession of his wife's heart. The first two or three years, I fear, cost him more trouble than any other man ever took, with his own wife at least; but he may now rest in peace—Lady Castleton is won, and for ever."

As my gentleman ceased, Lord Castleton's noble head rose above the group standing round him; and I saw Lady Castleton turn with a look of well-bred fatigue from a handsome young fop, who had affected to lower his voice while he spoke to her, and, encountering the eyes of her husband, the look changed at once into one of such sweet, smiling affection, such frank, unmistakable wife-like pride, that it seemed a response to the assertion—"Lady Castleton is won, and forever."

Yes, that story increased my admiration for Lord Castleton: it showed me with what forethought and earnest sense of responsibility he had undertaken the charge of a life, the guidance of a character yet undeveloped: it last-

ingly acquitted him of the levity that had been attributed to Sedley Beaudesert. But I felt more than ever contented that the task had devolved on one whose temper and experience had so fitted him to discharge it. That German prince made me tremble from sympathy with the husband, and in a sort of relative shudder for myself! Had that episode happened to me! I could never have drawn "high comedy" from it!—I could never have so happily closed the fifth act with a pinch of the Beaudesert mixture! No, no; to my homely sense of man's life and employment, there was nothing alluring in the prospect of watching over the golden tree in the garden, with a "woe to the Argus, if Mercury once lull him to sleep!" Wife of mine shall need no watching, save in sickness and sorrow! Thank heaven that my way of life does not lead through the roseate thoroughfares, beset with German princes laying bets for my perdition, and fine gentlemen admiring the skill with which I play at chess for so terrible a stake! To each rank and each temper, its own laws. I acknowledge that Fanny is an excellent marchioness, and Lord Castleton an incomparable marquis. But Blanche! if I can win thy true, simple heart, I trust I shall begin at the fifth act of high Comedy, and say at the altar—

"Once won, won for ever!"

CHAPTER VII.

I RODE home on a horse my host lent me; and Lord Castleton rode part of the way with me, accompanied by his two boys, who bestrode manfully their Shetland ponies, and cantered on before us. I paid some compliment to the spirit and intelligence of these children—a compliment they well deserved.

"Why, yes," said the marquis, with a father's becoming pride, "I hope neither of them will shame his grandsire, Trevanion. Albert (though not quite the wonder poor Lady Ulverstone declares him to be) is rather too precocious; and it is all I can do to prevent his being spoilt by flattery to his cleverness, which, I think, is much worse than even flattery to rank—a danger to which, despite Albert's destined inheritance, the elder brother is more exposed. Eton soon takes out the conceit of the latter and more vulgar kind. I remember Lord —— (you know what an unpretending, good-natured fellow he is now) strutting into the play-ground, a raw boy, with his chin up in the air, and burly Dick Johnson (rather a tuft-hunter now, I'm afraid) coming up, and saying, 'Well, sir, and who the deuce are you?' 'Lord ——,' says the poor devil unconsciously, 'eldest son of the Marquis of ——.' 'Oh, indeed!' cries Johnson; 'then, there's one kick for my lord, and two for the marquis!' I am not fond of kicking, but I doubt if anything ever did —— more good than those three kicks! But," continued Lord Castleton, "when one flatters a boy for his cleverness, even Eton itself cannot kick the conceit out of him. Let him be last in the form, and the greatest dunce ever flogged, there are always people to say that your public schools don't do for your great geniuses. And it is ten to one but what the father is plagued into taking the boy home, and giving him a private tutor, who fixes him into a prig for ever. A coxcomb in dress (said the marquis, smiling) is a trifler it would ill become me to condemn, and I own that I would rather see a youth a fop than a sloven; but a coxcomb in ideas—why, the younger he is, the more unnatural and disagreeable. Now, Albert, over that hedge, sir."

"That hedge, papa? The pony will never do it."

"Then," said Lord Castleton, taking off his hat with politeness, "I fear you will deprive us of the pleasure of your company."

The boy laughed, and made gallantly for the hedge, though I saw by his change of color that it a little alarmed him. The pony could not clear the hedge; but it was a pony of tact and resources, and it scrambled through like a cat, inflicting sundry rents and tears on a jacket of Raphael blue.

Lord Castleton said, smiling, "You see, I teach them to get through a difficulty one way or the other. Between you and me," he added, seriously, "I perceive a very different world rising round the next generation from that in which I first went forth and took my pleasure. I shall rear my boys accordingly. Rich noblemen must nowadays be useful men; and if they can't leap over briers, they must scramble through them. Don't you agree with me?"

"Yes, heartily."

"Marriage makes a man much wiser," said

the marquis, after a pause. "I smile now, to think how often I sighed at the thought of growing old. Now I reconcile myself to the gray hairs without dreams of a wig, and enjoy youth still—for" (pointing to his sons) "it is *there!*"

"He has very nearly found out the secret of the saffron bag now," said my father, pleased, and rubbing his hands, when I repeated this talk with Lord Castleton. "But I fear poor Trevanion," he added, with a compassionate change of countenance, "is still far away from the sense of Lord Bacon's receipt. And his wife, you say, out of very love for him, keeps always drawing discord from the one jarring wire."

"You must talk to her, sir."

"I will," said my father angrily; "and scold her too—foolish woman! I shall tell her Luther's advice to the Prince of Anhalt."

"What was that, sir?"

"Only to throw a baby into the river Maldon, because it had sucked dry five wet nurses besides the mother, and must therefore be a changeling. Why, that ambition of hers would suck dry all the mother's milk in the genus mammalian. And such a withered, rickety, malign little changeling too! She shall fling it into the river, by all that is holy!" cried my father; and, suiting the action to the word, away into the pond went the spectacles he had been rubbing indignantly for the last three minutes. "Papæ!" faltered my father, aghast, while the Ceprinidæ, mistaking the dip of the spectacles for an invitation to dinner, came scudding up to the bank. "It is all your fault," said Mr. Caxton, recovering himself. "Get me the new tortoise-shell spectacles and a large slice of bread. You see that when fish are reduced to a pond they recognize a benefactor, which they never do when rising at flies, or groping for worms, in the waste world of a river. Hem!—a hint for the Ulverstones. Besides the bread and the spectacles, just look out and bring me the old black-letter copy of St. Anthony's *Sermon to Fishes.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

Some weeks now have passed since my return to the Tower: the Castletons are gone, and all Trevanion's gay guests. And since these departures, visits between the two houses have been interchanged often, and the bonds of intimacy are growing close. Twice has my father held long conversations apart with Lady Ulverstone (my mother is not foolish enough to feel a pang now at such confidences), and the result has become apparent. Lady Ulverstone has ceased all talk against the world and the public—ceased to fret the galled pride of her husband with irritating sympathy. She has made herself the true partner of his present occupations, as she was of those in the past; she takes interest in farming, and gardens, and flowers, and those philosophical peaches which come from trees academical that Sir William Temple reared in his graceful retirement. She does more—she sits by her husband's side in the library, reads the books he reads, or, if in Latin, coaxes him into construing them. Insensibly she leads him into studies farther and farther remote from Blue Books and Hansard; and, taking my father's hint,

"Allures to brighter worlds, and leads the way."

They are inseparable. Darby-and-Joan-like, you see them together in the library, the garden, or the homely little pony-phaeton, for which Lord Ulverstone has resigned the fast-trotting cob, once identified with the eager looks of the busy Trevanion. It is most touching, most beautiful! And to think what a victory over herself the proud woman must have obtained! —never a thought that seems to murmur, never a word to recall the ambitious man back from the philosophy into which his active mind flies for refuge. And with the effort her brow has become so serene! That care-worn expression, which her fine features once wore, is fast vanishing. And what affects me most, is to think that this change (which is already settling into happiness) has been wrought by Austin's counsels and appeals to her sense and affection. "It is to you," he said, "that Trevanion must look for more than comfort—for cheerfulness and satisfaction. Your child is gone from you —the world ebbs away—you two should be all in all to each other. Be so." Thus, after paths so devious, meet those who had parted in youth, now on the verge of age. There, in the same scenes where Austin and Ellinor had first formed acquaintance, he, aiding her to

soothe the wounds inflicted by the ambition that had separated their lots, and both taking counsel to insure the happiness of the rival she had preferred.

After all this vexed public life of toil, and care, and ambition—to see Trevanion and Ellinor, drawing closer and closer to each other, knowing private life and its charms for the first time—verily, it would have been a theme for an elegiast like Tibullus.

But all this while a younger love, with no blurred leaves to erase from the chronicle, has been keeping sweet account of the summer time. "Very near are two hearts that have no guile between them," saith a proverb, traced back to Confucius. O ye days of still sunshine, reflected back from ourselves—O ye haunts, endeared evermore by a look, tone or smile, or rapt silence; when more and more with each hour unfolded before me, that nature, so tenderly coy, so cheerful though serious, so attuned by simple cares to affection, yet so filled, from soft musings and solitude, with a poetry that gave grace to duties the homeliest—setting life's trite things to music! Here nature and fortune concurred alike; equal in birth and pretensions—similar in tastes and in objects—loving the healthful activity of purpose, but content to find it around us—neither envying the wealthy nor vying with the great; each framed by temper to look on the bright side of life, and find founts of delight, and green spots fresh with verdure, where eyes but accustomed to cities could see but the sands and the mirage: while afar (as man's duty) I had gone through the travail that, in wrestling with fortune, gives pause to the heart to recover its losses, and know the value of love, in its graver sense of life's earnest realities; heaven had reared, at the thresholds of home, the young tree that should cover the roof with its blossoms, and embalm with its fragrance the daily air of my being.

It had been the joint prayer of those kind ones I left, that such might be my reward; and each had contributed, in his or her several way, to fit that fair life for the ornament and joy of the one that now asked to guard and to cherish it. From Roland came that deep, earnest honor—a man's in its strength, and a woman's in its delicate sense of refinement. From Roland, that quick taste for all things noble in poetry, and lovely in nature—the eye that sparkled to read how Bayard stood alone at the bridge, and saved an army—or wept over the page that told how the dying Sidney put the bowl from his burning lips. Is that too masculine a spirit for some? Let each please himself. Give me the woman who can echo all thoughts that are noblest in men! And that eye, too—like Roland's—could pause to note each finer mesh in the wonderful webwork of beauty. No landscape to her was the same yesterday and to-day—a deeper shade from the skies could change the face of the moors—the springing up of fresh wild flowers, the very song of some bird unheard before, lent variety to the broad rugged heath. Is that too simple a source of pleasure for some to prize? Be it so to those who need the keen stimulants that cities afford. But, if we were to pass all our hours in those scenes, it was something to have the tastes which own no monotony in Nature.

All this came from Roland; and to this, with thoughtful wisdom, my father had added enough knowledge from books to make those tastes more attractive, and to lend to impulsive perception of beauty and goodness the culture that draws finer essence from beauty, and expands the Good into the Better by heightening the site of the survey: hers, knowledge enough to sympathize with intellectual pursuits, not enough to dispute on man's province—Opinion. Still, whether in nature or in lore, still

> "The fairest garden in her looks,
> And in her mind the choicest books!"

And yet, thou wise Austin—and thou, Roland, poet that never wrote a verse—yet your work had been incomplete, but then Woman stept in, and the mother gave to her she designed for a daughter the last finish of meek every-day charities—the mild household virtues—"the soft word that turneth away wrath"—the angelic pity for man's rougher faults—the patience that bideth its time—and exacting no "rights of woman," subjugates us, delighted, to the invisible thrall.

Dost thou remember, my Blanche, that soft summer evening when the vows our eyes had long interchanged stole at last from the lip? Wife mine! come to my side—look over me while I write: there, thy tears—(happy tears are they not, Blanche?)—have blotted the page! Shall we tell the world more? Right,

my Blanche; no words should profane the place where those tears have fallen!

* * * * *

And here I would fain conclude; but alas, and alas! that I cannot associate with our hopes, on this side the grave, him who, we fondly hoped (even on the bridal-day, that gave his sister to my arms), would come to the hearth where his place now stood vacant, contented with glory, and fitted at last for the tranquil happiness which long years of repentance and trial had deserved.

Within the first year of my marriage, and shortly after a gallant share in a desperate action, which had covered his name with new honors, just when we were most elated, in the blinded vanity of human pride, came the fatal news! The brief career was run. He died, as I knew he would have prayed to die, at the close of a day ever memorable in the annals of that marvellous empire, which valor without parallel has annexed to the Throne of the Isles. He died in the arms of Victory, and his last smile met the eyes of the noble chief who, even in that hour, could pause from the tide of triumph by the victim it had cast on its bloody shore. "One favor," faltered the dying man; "I have a father at home—he, too, is a soldier. In my tent is my will: it gives all I have to him—he can take it without shame. That is not enough! Write to him—you—with your own hand, and tell him how his son fell!" And the hero fulfilled the prayer, and that letter is dearer to Roland than all the long roll of the ancestral dead! Nature has reclaimed her rights, and the forefathers recede before the son.

In a side chapel of the old gothic church, amidst the mouldering tombs of those who fought at Acre and Agincourt, a fresh tablet records the death of HERBERT DE CAXTON, with the simple inscription—

HE FELL ON THE FIELD:
HIS COUNTRY MOURNED HIM,
AND HIS FATHER IS RESIGNED.

Years have rolled away since that tablet was placed there, and changes have passed on that nook of earth which bounds our little world: fair chambers have sprung up amidst the desolate ruins; far and near, smiling corn-fields replace the bleak dreary moors. The land supports more retainers than ever thronged to the pennon of its barons of old; and Roland can look from his Tower over domains that are reclaimed, year by year, from the waste, till the ploughshare shall win a lordship more opulent than those feudal chiefs ever held by the tenure of the sword. And the hospitable mirth that had fled from the ruin has been renewed in the hall; and rich and poor, great and lowly, have welcomed the rise of an ancient house from the dust of decay. All those dreams of Roland's youth are fulfilled; but they do not gladden his heart like the thought that his son, at the last, was worthy of his line, and the hope that no gulf shall yawn between the two when the Grand Circle is rounded, and man's past and man's future meet where Time disappears. Never was that lost one forgotten!—never was his name breathed but tears rushed to the eyes; and, each morning, the peasant going to his labor might see Roland steal down the dell to the deep-set door of the chapel. None presume there to follow his steps, or intrude on his solemn thoughts; for there, in sight of that tablet, are his orisons made, and the remembrance of the dead forms a part of the commune with heaven. But the old man's step is still firm, and his brow still erect; and you may see in his face that it was no hollow boast which proclaimed that the "father was resigned:" and ye who doubt if too Roman a hardness might not be found in that Christian resignation, think what it is to have feared for a son the life of shame, and, ask then, if the sharpest grief to a father is in a son's death of honor!

Years have passed, and two fair daughters play at the knees of Blanche, or creep round the footstool of Austin, waiting patiently for the expected kiss when he looks up from the Great Book, now drawing fast to its close: or, if Roland enter the room, forget all their sober demureness, and, unawed by the terrible "Papæ!" run clamorous for the promised swing in the orchard, or the fiftieth recital of "Chevy Chase."

For my part, I take the goods the gods provide me, and am contented with girls that have the eyes of their mother; but Roland, ungrateful man, begins to grumble that we are so neglectful of the rights of heirs-male. He is in doubt whether to lay the fault on Mr. Squills or on us: I am not sure that he does not think

it a conspiracy of all three to settle the representation of the martial De Caxtons on the "spindle side." Whosoever be the right person to blame, an omission so fatal to the straight line in the pedigree is rectified at last, and Mrs. Primmins again rushes, or rather rolls—in the movement natural to forms globular and spheral—into my father's room, with—

"Sir, sir—it is a boy!"

Whether my father asked also this time that question so puzzling to metaphysical inquirers, "What is a boy?" I know not: I rather suspect he had not leisure for so abstract a question; for the whole household burst on him, and my mother, in that storm peculiar to the elements of the Mind Feminine—a sort of sunshiny storm between laughter and crying—whirled him off to behold the *Neogilos*.

Now, some months after that date, on a winter's evening, we were all assembled in the hall, which was still our usual apartment, since its size permitted to each his own segregated and peculiar employment. A large screen fenced off from interruption my father's erudite settlement; and quite out of sight, behind that impermeable barrier, he was now calmly winding up that eloquent peroration which will astonish the world whenever, by Heaven's special mercy, the printer's devils have done with "The History of Human Error." In another nook my uncle had ensconsed himself—stirring his coffee (in the cup my mother had presented to him so many years ago, and which had miraculously escaped all the ills the race of crockery is heir to), a volume of *Ivanhoe* in the other hand; and, despite the charm of the Northern Wizard, his eye *not* on the page. On the wall, behind him, hangs the picture of Sir Herbert de Caxton, the soldier-comrade of Sidney and Drake; and, at the foot of the picture, Roland has slung his son's sword beside the letter that spoke of his death, which is framed and glazed: sword and letter had become as the last, nor least honored, Penates of the hall:—the son was grown an ancestor.

Not far from my uncle sat Mr. Squills, employed in mapping out phrenological divisions on a cast he had made from the skull of one of the Australian aborigines—a ghastly present which (in compliance with a yearly letter to that effect) I had brought him over, together with a stuffed "wombat" and a large bundle of sarsaparilla. (For the satisfaction of his patients, I may observe, parenthetically, that the skull and the "wombat"—that last is a creature between a miniature pig and a very small badger—were not precisely packed up with the sarsaparilla!) Farther on stood open, but idle, the new pianoforte, at which, before my father had given his preparatory hem, and sat down to the Great Book, Blanche and my mother had been trying hard to teach me to bear the third in the glee of "The Chough and Crow to roost have gone,"—vain task, in spite of all flattering assurances that I have a very fine "bass," if I could but manage to humor it. Fortunately for the ears of the audience, that attempt is now abandoned. My mother is hard at work on her tapestry—the last pattern in fashion—to wit, a rosy-cheeked young troubadour playing the lute under a salmon-colored balcony: the two little girls look gravely on, prematurely in love, I suspect, with the troubadour; and Blanche and I have stolen away into a corner, which, by some strange delusion, we consider out of sight, and in that corner is the cradle of the *Neogilos*. Indeed, it is not our fault that it is there—Roland would have it so; and the baby is so good, too, he never cries—at least so say Blanche and my mother: at all events, he does not cry to-night. And, indeed, that child is a wonder! He seems to know and respond to what was uppermost at at our hearts when he was born; and yet more, when Roland (contrary, I dare say, to all custom) permitted neither mother, nor nurse, nor creature of womankind, to hold him at the baptismal font, but bent over the new Christian his own dark, high featured face, reminding one of the eagle that hid the infant in its nest, and watched over it with wings that had battled with the storm: and from that moment the child, who took the name of HERBERT, seemed to recognize Roland better than his nurse, or even mother—seemed to know that, in giving him that name, we sought to give Roland his son once more! Never did the old man come near the infant but it smiled, and crowed, and stretched out its little arms; and then the mother and I would press each other's hand secretly, and were not jealous. Well, then, Blanche and Pisistratus were seated near the cradle, and talking in low whispers, when my father pushed aside the screen, and said—

"There—the work is done!—and now it may go to press as soon as you will."

Congratulations poured in—my father bore them with his usual equanimity; and standing on the hearth, his hand in his waistcoat, he said, musingly, "Among the last delusions of Human Error, I have had to notice Rousseau's phantasy of Perpetual Peace, and all the like pastoral dreams, which preceded the bloodiest wars that have convulsed the earth for more than a thousand years!"

"And to judge by the newspapers," said I, "the same delusions are renewed again. Benevolent theorists go about prophesying peace as a positive certainty, deduced from that sibyl-book the ledger; and we are never again to buy cannons, provided only we can exchange cotton for corn."

MR. SQUILLS (who, having almost wholly retired from general business, has, from want of something better to do, attended sundry "Demonstrations in the North," since which he has talked much about the march of improvement, the spirit of the age, and "US of the XIXth century").—I heartily hope that those benevolent theorists *are* true prophets. I have found, in the course of my professional practice, that men go out of the world quite fast enough, without hacking them into pieces, or blowing them up into the air. War is a great evil.

BLANCHE (passing by Squills, and glancing towards Roland).—Hush!

Roland remains silent.

MR. CAXTON.—War is a great evil; but evil is admitted by Providence into the agency of creation, physical and moral. The existence of evil has puzzled wiser heads than ours, Squills. But, no doubt, there is One above who has His reasons for it. The combative bump seems as common to the human skull as the philoprogenitive,—if it is in our organization, be sure it is not there without cause. Neither is it just to man, nor wisely submissive to the Disposer of all events, to suppose that war is wholly and wantonly produced by human crimes and follies—that it conduces *only* to ill, and does not as often arise from the necessities interwoven in the framework of society, and speed the great ends of the human race, conformably with the designs of the Omniscient. Not one great war has ever desolated the earth, but has left behind it seeds that have ripened into blessings incalculable!

MR. SQUILLS (with the groan of a dissentient at a "Demonstration").—*Oh! oh!* OH!

Luckless Squills! Little could he have foreseen the shower-bath, or rather *douche*, of erudition that fell splash on his head, as he pulled the string with that impertinent *Oh! oh!* Down first came the Persian War, with Median myriads disgorging all the rivers they had drunk up in their march through the East—all the arts, all the letters, all the sciences, all the notions of liberty that we inherit from Greece—my father rushed on with them all, sousing Squills with his proofs that, without the Persian war, Greece would never have risen to be the teacher of the world. Before the gasping victim could take breath, down came Hun, Goth, and Vandal, on Italy and Squills.

"What, sir!" cried my father, "don't you see that from those eruptions on demoralized Rome came the regeneration of manhood; the re-baptism of earth from the last soils of paganism; and the remote origin of whatever of Christianity yet exists, free from the idolatries with which Rome contaminated the faith?"

Squills held up his hands and made a splutter. Down came Charlemagne—paladins and all! There my father was grand! What a picture he made of the broken, jarring, savage elements of barbaric society. And the iron hand of the great Frank—settling the nations and founding existent Europe. Squills was now fast sinking into coma, or stupefaction; but, catching at a straw, as he heard the word "Crusades," he stuttered forth, "Ah! *there* I defy you."

"Defy me there!" cries my father: and one would think the ocean was in the shower-bath, it came down with such a rattle. My father scarcely touched on the smaller points in excuse for the Crusades, though he recited very volubly all the humaner arts introduced into Europe by that invasion of the East; and showed how it had served civilization, by the vent it afforded for the rude energies of chivalry—by the element of destruction to feudal tyranny that it introduced—by its use in the emancipation of burghs, and the disrupture of serfdom. But he painted, in colors vivid, as if caught from the skies of the east, the great spread of Mahometanism, and the danger it menaced to Christian Europe—and drew up the Godfreys, and Tancreds, and Richards, as a league of the Age and Necessity, against the terrible

progress of the sword and the Koran. "You call them madmen," cried my father, "but the frenzy of nations is the statesmanship of fate! How know you that—but for the terror inspired by the hosts who marched to Jerusalem—how know you that the Crescent had not waved over other realms than those which Roderic lost to the Moor? If Christianity had been less a passion, and the passion had less stirred up all Europe—how know you that the creed of the Arab (which was then, too, a passion) might not have planted its mosques in the forum of Rome, and on the site of Notre Dame? For in the war between creeds—when the creeds are embraced by vast races—think you that the reason of sages can cope with the passion of millions? Enthusiasm must oppose enthusiasm. The crusader fought for the tomb of Christ, but he saved the life of Christendom."

My father paused. Squills was quite passive; he struggled no more—he was drowned.

"So," resumed Mr. Caxton, more quietly—"so, if later wars yet perplex us as to the good that the All-wise One draws from their evils, our posterity may read their uses as clearly as we now read the finger of Providence resting on the barrows of Marathon, or guiding Peter the Hermit to the battle-fields of Palestine. Nor, while we admit the evil to the passing generation, can we deny that many of the virtues that make the ornament and vitality of peace sprung up first in the convulsion of war!" Here Squills began to evince faint signs of resuscitation, when my father let fly at him one of those numberless waterworks which his prodigious memory kept in constant supply. "Hence," said he, "hence, not unjustly, has it been remarked by a philosopher, shrewd at least in worldly experience—(Squills again closed his eyes, and became exanimate)—'It is strange to imagine that war, which of all things appears the most savage, should be the passion of the most heroic spirits. But 'tis in war that the knot of fellowship is closest drawn; 'tis in war that mutual succor is most given—mutual danger run, and common affection most exerted and employed; for heroism and philanthropy are almost one and the same!'" *

My father ceased, and mused a little. Squills, if still living, thought it prudent to feign continued extinction.

* Shaftesbury.

"Not," said Mr. Caxton, resuming—"not but what I hold it our duty never to foster into a passion what we must rather submit to as an awful necessity. You say truly, Mr. Squills,—war is an evil; and woe to those who, on slight pretences, open the gates of Janus,

——'The dire abode,
And the fierce issues of the furious god.'"

Mr. Squills, after a long pause—employed in some of the more handy means for the reanimation of submerged bodies, supporting himself close to the fire in a semi-erect posture, with gentle friction, self-applied, to each several limb, and copious recourse to certain steaming stimulants which my compassionate hands prepared for him—stretches himself, and says feebly, "In short, then, not to provoke farther discussion, you would go to war in defence of your country. Stop, sir—stop, for Heaven's sake! I agree with you, I agree with you! But, fortunately, there is little chance now that any new Boney will build boats at Boulogne to invade us."

Mr. Caxton.—I am not so sure of that, Mr. Squills. (Squills falls back with a glassy stare of deprecating horror.) I don't read the newspapers very often, but the past helps me to judge of the present.

Therewith my father earnestly recommended to Mr. Squills the careful perusal of certain passages in Thucydides, just previous to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war (Squills hastily nodded the most servile acquiescence), and drew an ingenious parallel between the signs and symptoms foreboding that outbreak, and the very apprehension of coming war which was evinced by the recent *Io pæans* to peace.* And, after sundry notable and shrewd remarks, tending to show where elements for war were already ripening, amidst clashing opinions and disorganized states, he wound up with saying—"So that, all things considered, I think we had better just keep up enough of the bellicose spirit, not to think it a sin if we are called upon to fight for our pestles and mortars, our three-per-cents, goods, chattels, and liber-

* When this work was first published, Mr. Caxton was generally deemed a very false prophet in these anticipations, and sundry critics were pleased to consider his apology for war neither seasonable nor philosophical. That Mr. Caxton was right, and the politicians opposed to him have been somewhat ludicrously wrong, may be briefly accounted for—Mr. Caxton had read history.

ties. Such a time must come, sooner or later, even though the whole world were spinning cotton, and printing sprigged calicoes. *We* may not see it, Squills, but that young gentleman in the cradle, whom you have lately brought into light, may."

"And if so," said my uncle abruptly, speaking for the first time—"if indeed it be for altar and hearth!" My father suddenly drew in and pished a little, for he saw that he was caught in the web of his own eloquence.

Then Roland took down from the wall his son's sword. Stealing to the cradle, he laid it in its sheath by the infant's side, and glanced from my father to us with a beseeching eye. Instinctively Blanche bent over the cradle, as if to protect the *Neogilos;* but the child, waking, turned from her, and, attracted by the glitter of the hilt, laid one hand lustily thereon, and pointed with the other, laughingly, to Roland.

"Only on my father's proviso," said I, hesitatingly. "For hearth and altar—nothing less!"

"And even in that case," said my father, "add the shield to the sword!" and on the other side of the infant he placed Roland's well-worn Bible, blistered in many a page with secret tears.

There we all stood, grouping round the young centre of so many hopes and fears—in peace or in war, born alike for the Battle of Life. And he, unconscious of all that made our lips silent, and our eyes dim, had already left that bright bauble of the sword, and thrown both arms round Roland's bended neck.

"*Herbert!*" murmured Roland; and Blanche gently drew away the sword—and left the Bible.

END OF "THE CAXTONS."

NOTES TO "THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII."

NOTES TO BOOK I.

(*a*) p. 11.—"Flowers more alluring to the ancient Italians than to their descendants," etc.

The modern Italians, especially those of the more southern parts of Italy, have a peculiar horror of perfumes; they consider them remarkably unwholesome; and the Roman or Neapolitan lady requests her visitors not to use them. What is very strange, the nostril so susceptible of a perfume is wonderfully obtuse to its reverse. You may literally call Rome, "*Sentina Gentium*"—the sink of nations.

(*b*) p. 20.—"The sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius."

A very curious and interesting treatise might be written on the parasites of Greece and Rome. In the former, they were more degraded than in the latter country. The *Epistles* of Alciphron express, in a lively manner, the insults which they underwent for the sake of a dinner: one man complains that fish-sauce was thrown into his eyes—that he was beat on the head, and given to eat stones smeared with honey; while a courtesan threw at him a bladder filled with blood, which burst on his face and covered him with the stream. The manner in which these parasites repaid the hospitality of their hosts was, like that of modern diners-out, by witty jokes and amusing stories; sometimes they indulged practical jokes on each other, "boxing one another's ears." The magistrates at Athens appear to have looked very sternly upon these hungry buffoons, and they complain of stripes and a prison with no philosophical resignation. In fact, the parasite seems at Athens to have answered the purpose of the fool of the middle ages; but he was far more worthless and perhaps more witty—the associate of courtesans, uniting the pimp with the buffoon. This is a character peculiar to Greece. The Latin comic writers make indeed prodigal use of the parasite; yet he appears at Rome to have held a somewhat higher rank, and to have met with a somewhat milder treatment, than at Athens. Nor do the delineations of Terence, which, in portraying Athenian manners, probably soften down whatever would have been exaggerated to a Roman audience, present so degraded or so abandoned a character as the parasite of Alciphron and Athenæus. The more haughty and fastidious Romans often disdained indeed to admit such buffoons as companions, and hired (as we may note in Pliny's *Epistles*) fools or mountebanks, to entertain their guests and supply the place of the Grecian parasite. When (be it observed) Clodius is styled parasite in the text, the reader must take the modern, not the ancient interpretation of the word.

A very feeble, but very flattering reflex of the parasite was the umbra or shadow, who accompanied any invited guest, and who was sometimes a man of equal consequence, though usually a poor relative, or an humble friend—in modern cant, "a toady." Such is the umbra of our friend Clodius.

(*c*) p. 22.—"The dice in summer, and I an ædile!"

All games of chance were forbidden by law ("Vetitâ legibus aleâ."—*Horat. Od.* xxiv. l. 3), except "in Saturnalibus," during the month of December: the ædiles were charged with enforcing this law, which, like all laws against gaming, in all times, was wholly ineffectual.

(*d*) p. 25.—"The small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis."

Sylla is said to have transported to Italy the worship of the Egyptian Isis.* It soon became "the rage," and was peculiarly in vogue with the Roman ladies. Its priesthood were sworn to chastity, and, like all such brotherhoods, were noted for their licentiousness. Juvenal styles the priestesses by a name (Isiacæ lenæ) that denotes how convenient they were to lovers, and under the mantle of night many an amorous intrigue was carried on in the purlieus of the sacred temples. A lady vowed for so many nights to watch by the shrine of Isis;—it was a sacrifice of continence towards her husband, to be bestowed on her lover! While one passion of human nature was thus appealed to, another scarcely less strong was also pressed into the service of the goddess—namely, Credulity. The priests of Isis arrogated a knowledge of magic and of the future. Among women of all classes—and among many of the harder sex—the Egyptian sorceries were consulted and revered as oracles. Voltaire, with much plausible ingenuity, endeavors to prove that the gipsies are a remnant of the ancient priests and priestesses of Isis, intermixed with those of the goddess of Syria. In the time of Apuleius these holy impostors had lost their dignity and importance; despised and poor, they wandered from place to place selling prophecies and curing disorders; and Voltaire shrewdly bids us remark that Apuleius has not forgot their peculiar skill in filching from out-houses and court-yards—afterwards they practised palmistry and singular dances (query, the Bohemian dances!). "Such," says the too-conclusive Frenchman, "such has been the end of the ancient religion of Isis and Osiris, whose very names still impress us with awe!" At the time in which my story is cast, the worship of Isis was, however, in the highest repute; and the wealthy devotees sent even to the Nile, that they might sprinkle its mysterious waters over the altars of the goddess. I have introduced the ibis in the sketch of the temple of Isis, although it has been supposed that that bird languished and died when taken from Egypt. But from various reasons, too long now to enumerate, I incline to believe that the ibis was by no means unfrequent in the Italian temples of Isis, though it rarely lived long, and refused to breed in a foreign climate.

* In the Campanian cities the trade with Alexandria was probably more efficacious than the piety of Sylla (no very popular example, perhaps,) in establishing the worship of the favorite deity of Egypt.

NOTE TO BOOK II.

(*a*) p. 78.—"The marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius."

During the earlier ages of the Christian epoch, the Heathern Philosophy, especially of Pythagoras and of Plato, had become debased and adulterated, not only by the wildest mysticism, but the most chimerical dreams of magic. Pythagoras, indeed, scarcely merited a nobler destiny; for though he was an exceedingly clever man, he was a most prodigious mountebank, and was exactly formed to be the great father of a school of magicians. Pythagoras himself either cultivated magic or arrogated its attributes, and his followers told marvellous tales of his writing on the moon's disc, and appearing in several places at once. His golden rules and his golden thigh were in especial veneration in Magna Græcia, and out of his doctrines of occult numbers his followers extracted numbers of doctrines. The most remarkable of the later impostors who succeeded him was Apollonius of Tyana, referred to in the text. All sorts of prodigies accompanied the birth of this gentleman. Proteus, the Egyptian god, foretold to his mother yet pregnant, that it was he himself (Proteus) who was about to reappear in the world through her agency. After this, Proteus might well be considered to possess the power of transformation! Apollonius knew the language of birds, read men's thoughts in their bosoms, and walked about with a familiar spirit. He was a devil of a fellow with a devil, and induced a mob to stone a poor demon of venerable and mendicant appearance, who, after the lapidary operation, changed into a huge dog. He raised the dead, passed a night with Achilles, and, when Domitian was murdered, he called out aloud (though at Ephesus at the moment), "Strike the tyrant!" The end of so honest and great a man was worthy his life. It would seem that he ascended into heaven. What less could be expected of one who had stoned the devil? Should any English writer meditate a new Faust, I recommend to him Apollonius.

But the magicians of *this* sort were philosophers (!)—excellent men and pious; there were others of a far darker and deadlier knowledge, the followers of the Goetic magic; in other words, the Black Art. Both of these, the Goetic and the Theurgic, seem to be of Egyptian origin; and it is evident, at least, that their practitioners appeared to pride themselves on drawing their chief secrets from that ancient source;—and both are intimately connected with astrology. In attributing to Arbaces the knowledge and the repute of magic, as well as that of the science of the stars, I am, therefore, perfectly in accordance with the spirit of his time, and the circumstances of his birth. He is a characteristic of that age. At one time, I purposed to have developed and detailed more than I have done the pretensions of Arbaces to the mastery of his art, and to have initiated the reader into the various sorceries of the period. But as the character of the Egyptian grew upon me, I felt that it was necessary to be sparing of that machinery which, thanks to the march of knowledge, every one now may fancy he can detect. Such as he is, Arbaces is become too much of an intellectual creation to demand a frequent repetition of the coarser and more physical materials of terror. I suffered him, then, merely to demonstrate his capacities in the elementary and obvious secrets of his craft, and leave the subtler magic he possesses to rest in mystery and shadow.

As to the Witch of Vesuvius,—her spells and her philtres, her cavern and its appliances, however familiar to us of the North, are faithful also to her time and nation. A witch of a lighter character, and manners less ascetic, the learned reader will remember with delight in the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius; and the reader who is *not* learned, is recommended to the spirited translation of that enchanting romance by Taylor.

NOTE TO BOOK III.

(*a*) p. 86.—"The influence of the evil eye."

This superstition, to which I have more than once alluded throughout this work, still flourishes in Magna Græcia, with scarcely diminished vigor. I remember conversing at Naples with a lady of the highest rank, and of intellect and information very uncommon amongst the noble Italians of either sex, when I suddenly observed her change color, and make a rapid and singular motion with her finger. "My God, that man!" she whispered tremblingly.

"What man?"

"See! the Count *****! he has just entered."

"He ought to be much flattered to cause such emotion; doubtless he has been one of the Signora's admirers?"

"Admirer! Heaven forbid! He has the evil eye! His look fell upon me. Something dreadful will certainly happen."

"I see nothing remarkable in his eyes."

"So much the worse. The danger is greater for being disguised. He is a terrible man. The last time he looked upon my husband, it was at cards, and he lost half his income at a sitting; his ill-luck was miraculous. The Count met my little boy in the gardens, and the poor child broke his arm that evening. Oh! what shall I do? something dreadful will certainly happen—and, heavens! he is admiring my cap!"

"Does every one find the eyes of the Count equally fatal, and his admiration equally exciting?"

"Every one—he is universally dreaded; and, what is very strange, he is so angry if he sees you avoid him!"

"That *is* very strange indeed! the wretch!"

At Naples the superstition works well for the jewellers,—so many charms and talismans as they sell for the ominous fascination of the *mal-occhio!* In Pompeii, the talismans were equally numerous, but not always of so elegant a shape, nor of so decorous a character. But, generally speaking, a coral ornament was, as it now is, among the favorite averters of the evil influence. The Thebans about Pontus were supposed to have an hereditary claim to this charming attribute, and could even kill grown-up men with a glance. As for Africa, where the belief also still exists, certain families could not only destroy children, but wither up trees—they did this, not with curses but praises. The *malus oculus* was not always different from the eyes of other people. But persons, especially of the fairer sex, with double pupils to the organ, were above all to be shunned and dreaded. The Illyrians were said to possess this fatal deformity. In all countries, even in the north, the eye has ever been held the chief seat of fascination; but nowadays, ladies with a single pupil manage the work of destruction pretty easily. So much do we improve upon our forefathers!

NOTE TO BOOK IV.

(*a*) p. 189.

"We care not for gods up above us,—
We know there's no god for this earth, boys!"

The doctrines of Epicurus himself are pure and simple. Far from denying the existence of diviner powers, Velleius (the defender and explainer of his philosophy in Cicero's dialogue on the Nature of the Gods) asserts "that Epicurus was the first who saw that there were gods from the impression which Nature herself makes on the minds of all men." He imagined the belief of the Deity to be an innate or antecedent notion (προλήψις) of the mind—a doctrine of which modern metaphysicians (certainly not Epicureans) have largely availed themselves! He believed that worship was due to the divine powers from the veneration which felicity and excellence command, and not from any dread of their vengeance, or awe of

their power; a sublime and fearless philosophy, suitable perhaps to half-a-dozen great and refined spirits, but which would present no check to the passions of the mass of mankind. According to him, the gods were far too agreeably employed, in contemplating their own happiness, to trouble their heads about the sorrows and the joys, the quarrels and the cares, the petty and transitory affairs, of man. For this earth they were unsympathizing abstractions:

"Wrapt up in majesty divine,
Can they regard on what we dine?"

Cotta, who, in the dialogue referred to, attacks the philosophy of Epicurus with great pleasantry, and considerable, though not uniform, success, draws the evident and practical corollary from the theory that asserts the non-interference of the gods. "How," says he, "can there be sanctity, if the gods regard not human affairs?—if the Deity shew no benevolence to man, let us dismiss him at once. Why should I entreat him to be propitious? He cannot be propitious,—since, according to you, favor and benevolence are only the effects of imbecility." Cotta, indeed, quotes from Posidonius (*De Natura Deorum*), to prove that Epicurus did not really believe in the existence of a God; but that his concession of a being wholly nugatory was merely a precaution against accusations of atheism. "Epicurus could not be such a fool," says Cotta, "as sincerely to believe that a Deity has the members of a man without the power to use them; *a thin pellucidity*, regarding no one and doing nothing." And, whether this be true or false concerning Epicurus, it is certain that, to all effects and purposes, his later disciples were but refining atheists. The sentiments uttered in the song in the text are precisely those professed in sober prose by the graceful philosophers of the Garden, who, as they had wholly perverted the morals of Epicurus, which are at once pure and practical, found it a much easier task to corrupt his metaphysics, which are equally dangerous and visionary.

NOTES TO BOOK V.

(*a*) p. 215.—"Rivers of the molten lava."

Various theories as to the exact mode by which Pompeii was destroyed have been invented by the ingenious; I have adopted that which is the most generally received, and which, upon inspecting the strata, appears the only one admissible by common sense; namely, a destruction by showers of ashes, and boiling water, mingled with frequent irruptions of large stones, and aided by partial convulsions of the earth. Herculaneum, on the contrary, appears to have received not only the showers of ashes, but also inundations from molten lava; and the streams referred to in the text must be considered as destined for that city rather than for Pompeii. The volcanic lightnings introduced in my description were evidently among the engines of ruin at Pompeii. Papyrus, and other of the more inflammable materials, are found in a burnt state. Some substances in metal are partially melted; and a bronze statue is completely shivered, as by lightning. Upon the whole (excepting only the inevitable poetic license of shortening the time which the destruction occupied), I believe my description of that awful event is very little assisted by invention, and will be found not the less accurate for its appearance in a Romance.

(*b*) p. 220.—"A love that has taken a new sentiment in our new creed."

What we now term, and feel to be, *sentiment* in love, was very little known amongst the ancients, and at this day is scarcely acknowledged out of Christendom. It is a feeling intimately connected with—not a belief, but a *conviction*, that the passion is of the soul, and, like the soul, immortal. Chateaubriand, in that work so full both of error and of truth, his essay on *The Genius of Christianity*, has referred to this sentiment with his usual eloquence. It makes, indeed, the great distinction between the amatory poetry of the moderns and that of the ancients. And I have thought that I might, with some consonance to truth and nature, attribute the consciousness of this sentiment to Glaucus after his conversion to Christianity, though he is only able vaguely to guess at, rather than thoroughly to explain, its cause.

(*c*) p. 221.—"And every where, the bones and skeletons of those who once moved the springs of that minute yet gorgeous machine of luxury and of life!"

At present (1834) there have been about three hundred and fifty or four hundred skeletons discovered in Pompeii; but as a great part of the city is yet to be disinterred, we can scarcely calculate the number of those who perished in the destruction. Still, however, we have every reason to conclude that they were very few in proportion to those who escaped. The ashes had been evidently cleared away from many of the houses, no doubt for the purpose of recovering whatever treasures had been left behind. The mansion of our friend Sallust is one of those thus revisited. The skeletons which, reanimated for awhile, the reader has seen play their brief parts upon the stage, under the names of Burbo, Calenus, Diomed, Julia, and Arbaces, were found exactly as described in the text:—may they have been re-animated more successfully for the pleasure of the reader than they have been for the solace of the author, who has vainly endeavored, in the work which he now concludes, to beguile the most painful, gloomy, and despondent period of a life, in the web of which has been woven less of white than the world may deem! But like most other friends, the Imagination is capricious, and forsakes us often at the moment in which we most need its aid. As we grow older, we begin to learn that, of the two, our more faithful and steadfast comforter is—Custom. But I should apologize for this sudden and unseasonable indulgence of a momentary weakness—it is *but* for a moment. With returning health returns also that energy, without which the soul were given us in vain, and which enables us calmly to face the evils of our being, and resolutely to fulfil its objects. There is but one philosophy (though there are a thousand schools), and its name is Fortitude:

"TO BEAR IS TO CONQUER OUR FATE!"

NOTES TO "HAROLD."

Note (*a*), page 234.

THERE are various accounts in the Chroniclers as to the stature of William the First; some represent him as a giant, others as of just or middle height. Considering the vulgar inclination to attribute to a hero's stature the qualities of the mind (and putting out of all question the arguments that rest on the pretended size of the disburied bones—for which the authorities are really less respectable than those on which we are called upon to believe that the skeleton of the mythical Gawaine measured eight feet), we prefer that supposition, as to the physical proportions, which is most in harmony with the usual laws of Nature. It is rare, indeed, that a great intellect is found in the form of a giant.

Note (*b*), page 240.

Game Laws before the Conquest.

UNDER the Saxon kings a man might, it is true, hunt in

his own grounds, but that was a privilege that could benefit few but thegns; and over cultivated ground or shire-land there was not the same sport to be found as in the vast wastes called forest-land, and which mainly belonged to the kings.

Edward declares, in a law recorded in a volume of the Exchequer, "I will that *all* men do abstain from hunting in my woods, and that my will shall be obeyed under penalty of life."*

Edgar, the darling monarch of the monks, and, indeed, one of the most popular of the Anglo-Saxon kings, was so rigorous in his forest-laws that the thegns murmured as well as the lower husbandmen, who had been accustomed to use the woods for pasturage and boscage. Canute's forest-laws were meant as a liberal concession to public feeling on the subject; they are more definite than Edgar's, but terribly stringent; if a freeman killed one of the king's deer, or struck his forester, he lost his freedom and became a penal serf (white theowe)—that is, he ranked with felons. Nevertheless, Canute allowed bishops, abbots, and thegns to hunt in his woods—a privilege restored by Henry III. The nobility, after the Conquest, being excluded from the royal chases, petitioned to enclose parks, as early even as the reign of William I.; and by the time of his son, Henry I., parks became so common as to be at once a ridicule and a grievance.

Note (*c*), page 243.

Belin's Gate.

VERSTEGAN combats the Welsh antiquaries who would appropriate this gate to the British deity, Bal, or Beli; and says, if so, it would not have been called by a name half Saxon, half British, gate (geat) being Saxon; but rather Belinsport, than Belinsgate. This is no very strong argument; for, in the Norman time, many compound words were half Norman, half Saxon. But, in truth, Belin was a Teuton deity, whose worship pervaded all Gaul; and the Saxon might either have continued, therefore, the name they found, or given it themselves, from their own god. I am not inclined, however, to contend that any deity, Saxon or British, gave the name, or that Billing is not, after all, the right orthography. Billing, like all words ending in *ing*, has something very Danish in its sound; and the name is quite as likely to have been given by the Danes as by the Saxons.

Note (*d*), page 244.

Vineyards in England.

THE question whether or not real vineyards were grown, or real wine made from them in England, has been a very vexed question among the antiquaries. But it is scarcely possible to read Pegge's dispute with Daines Barrington in the *Archæologia* without deciding both questions in the affirmative.—See *Archæol.* vol. iii. p. 53. An engraving of the Saxon wine-press is given in STRUTT'S *Horda*. Vineyards fell into disuse, either by treaty with France, or Gascony falling into the hands of the English. But vineyards were cultivated by private gentlemen as late as 1621. Our first wines from Bordeaux—the true country of Bacchus—appear to have been imported about 1154, by the marriage of Henry II. with Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Note (*e*), page 262.

Lanfranc, the first Anglo-Norman Archbishop of Canterbury.

LANFRANC was, in all respects, one of the most remarkable men of the eleventh century. He was born in Pavia, about 1105. His family was noble—his father ranked amongst the magistrature of Pavia, the Lombard capital. From his earliest youth he gave himself up, with all a scholar's zeal, to the liberal arts, and the special knowledge of law, civil and ecclesiastical. He studied at Cologne, and afterwards taught and practised law in his own country. "While yet extremely young," says one of the lively chroniclers, "he triumphed over the ablest advocates, and the torrents of his eloquence confounded the subtlest rhetorician." His decisions were received as authorities by the Italian jurisconsults and tribunals. His mind, to judge both by his history and his peculiar reputation (for probably few, if any, students of our day can pretend to more than a partial or superficial acquaintance with his writings), was one that delighted in subtleties and casuistical refinements; but a sense too large and commanding for those studies which amuse but never satisfy the higher intellect, became disgusted betimes with mere legal dialectics. Those grand and absorbing mysteries connected with the Christian faith and the Roman Church (grand and absorbing in proportion as their premises are taken by religious belief as mathematical axioms already proven) seized hold of his imagination, and tasked, to the depth, his inquisitive reason. The Chronicle of Knyghton cites an interesting anecdote of his life at this, its important, crisis. He had retired to a solitary spot, beside the Seine, to meditate on the mysterious essence of the Trinity, when he saw a boy ladling out the waters of the river that ran before him into a little well. His curiosity arrested, he asked "what the boy proposed to do?" The boy replied, "to empty you deep into this well." "That canst thou never do," said the scholar. "Nor canst thou," answered the boy, "exhaust the deep on which thou dost meditate into the well of thy reason." Therewith the speaker vanished, and Lanfranc resigning the hope to achieve the mighty mystery, threw himself at once into the arms of faith, and took his refuge in the monastery of Bec.

The tale may be a legend, but not an idle one. Perhaps he related it himself as a parable, and by the fiction explained the process of thought that decided his career. In the prime of his manhood, about 1042, when he was thirty-seven years old, and in the zenith of his scholarly fame, he professed. The Convent of Bec had been lately founded, under Herluin, the first abbot; there Lanfranc opened a school, which became one of the most famous throughout the west of Europe. Indeed, under the Lombard's influence, the then obscure Convent of Bec, to which the solitude of the site, and the poverty of the endowment, allured his choice, grew the Academe of the age. "It was," says Oderic, in his charming chronicle, "it was under such a master that the Normans received their first notions of literature; from that school emerged the multitude of eloquent philosophers who adorned alike divinity and science. From France, Gascony, Bretagne, Flanders, scholars thronged to receive his lessons."*

At first, as superficially stated in the tale, Lanfranc had taken part against the marriage of William with Matilda of Flanders—a marriage clearly contrary to the formal canons of the Roman Church, and was banished by the fiery Duke; though William's displeasure gave way at "the decent joke" (*joeus decens*), recorded in the text. At Rome, however, his influence, arguments, and eloquence, were all enlisted on the side of William; and it was to the scholar of Pavia that the great Norman owed the ultimate sanction of his marriage, and the repeal of the interdict that excommunicated his realm. †

At Rome he assisted in the council held 1059 (the year wherein the ban of the Church was finally and formally taken from Normandy), at which the famous Berenger, Archdeacon of Angers (against whom he had waged a polemical controversy that did more than all else to

* Thomson's Essay on Magna Charta.

* Orderic, Vital. lib. 4.

† The date of William's marriage has been variously stated in English and Norman history, but is usually fixed in 1051-2. M. Pluquet, however, in a note to his edition of the "Roman de Rou," says that the only authority for the date of that marriage is in the Chronicle of Tours, and it is there referred to 1053. It would seem that the Papal excommunication was not actually taken off till 1059; nor the formal dispensation for the marriage granted till 1063.

secure his repute at the Pontifical Court), abjured "his heresies" as to the Real Presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

In 1062, or 1063, Duke William, against the Lombard's own will (for Lanfranc genuinely loved the liberty of letters more than vulgar power), raised him to the abbacy of St. Stephen of Caen. From that time, his ascendancy over his haughty lord was absolute. The contemporary historian (William of Poitiers), says that "William respected him as a father, venerated him as a preceptor, and cherished him as a brother or son." He confided to him his own designs; and committed to him the entire superintendence of the ecclesiastical orders throughout Normandy. Eminent no less for his practical genius in affairs, than for his rare piety and theological learning, Lanfranc attained indeed to the true ideal of the Scholar; to whom, of all men, nothing that is human should be foreign; whose closet is but a hermit's cell, unless it is the microcosm that embraces the mart and the forum; who by the reflective part of his nature seizes the higher region of philosophy—by the energetic, is attracted to the central focus of action. For scholarship is but the parent of ideas; and ideas are the parents of action.

After the conquest, as prelate of Canterbury, Lanfranc became the second man in the kingdom—happy, perhaps, for England had he been the first; for all the anecdotes recorded of him show a deep and genuine sympathy with the oppressed population. But William the King of the English escaped from the control which Lanfranc had imposed on the Duke of the Normans. The scholar had strengthened the aspirer; he could only imperfectly influence the conqueror.

Lanfranc was not, it is true, a faultless character. He was a priest, a lawyer, and a man of the world—three characters hard to amalgamate into perfection, especially in the eleventh century. But he stands in gigantic and brilliant contrast to the rest of our priesthood in his own day, both in the superiority of his virtues, and in his exemption from the ordinary vices. He regarded the cruelties of Odo of Bayeux with detestation, opposed him with firmness, and ultimately, to the joy of all England, ruined his power. He gave a great impetus to learning; he set a high example to his monks, in his freedom from the mercenary sins of their order; he laid the foundations of a powerful and splendid church, which, only because it failed in future Lanfrancs, failed in effecting the civilization of which he designed it to be the instrument. He refused to crown William Rufus, until that king had sworn to govern according to law and to right; and died, though a Norman usurper, honored and beloved by the Saxon people.

Scholar, and morning star of light in the dark age of force and fraud, it is easier to praise thy life, than to track through the length of centuries all the measureless and invisible benefits which the life of one scholar bequeaths to the world—in the souls it awakens—in the thoughts it suggests! *

Note (*f*), page 263.

Edward the Confessor's reply to Magnus of Denmark who claimed his Crown.

On rare occasions Edward was not without touches of a brave kingly nature.

Snorro Sturleson gives us a noble and spirited reply of the Confessor to Magnus, who, as heir of Canute, claimed the English crown; it concludes thus,—"Now, he (Hardicanute) died, and then it was the resolution of all the people of the country to take me, for the king here in England. So long as I had no kingly title I served my superiors, in all respects, like those who had no claims by birth to land or kingdom. Now, however, I have received the kingly title, and am consecrated king; I have established my royal dignity and authority, as my father before me; and while I live, I will not renounce my title. If King Magnus comes here with an army, I will gather no army against him; but he shall only get the opportunity of taking England when he has taken my life. Tell him these words of mine." If we may consider this reply to be authentic, it is significant, as proof that Edward rests his title on the resolution of the people to take him for king; and counts as nothing, in comparison, his hereditary claims. This, together with the general tone of the reply, particularly the passage in which he implies that he trusts his defence not to his army but his people—makes it probable that Godwin dictated the answer; and, indeed, Edward himself could not have couched it, either in Saxon or Danish. But the king is equally entitled to the credit of it, whether he composed it, or whether he merely approved and sanctioned its gallant tone and its princely sentiment.

Note (*g*), page 264.

Heralds.

So much of the "pride, pomp, and circumstance" which invest the Age of Chivalry is borrowed from these companions of princes, and blazoners of noble deeds, that it may interest the reader, if I set briefly before him what our best antiquaries have said as to their first appearance in our own history.

Camden (somewhat, I fear, too rashly) says, that "their reputation, honor, and name began in the time of Charlemagne." The first mention of heralds in England occurs in the reign of Edward III., a reign in which chivalry was at its dazzling zenith. Whitlock says, "that some derive the name of Herald from Hereauld," a Saxon word (old soldier, or old master), "because anciently they were chosen from veteran soldiers." Joseph Holland says, "I find that Malcolm, King of Scots, sent a herald unto William the Conqueror, to treat of a peace, when both armies were in order of battle." Agard affirms, that "at the conquest there was no practice of heraldry;" and observes truly, "that the Conqueror used a monk for his messenger to King Harold."

To this I may add, that monks or priests also fulfil the office of heralds in the old French and Norman Chronicles. Thus Charles the Simple sends an archbishop to treat with Rolfganger; Louis the Debonnair sends to Mormon, chief of the Bretons, "a sage and prudent abbot." But in the Saxon times, the nuncius (a word still used in heraldic Latin) was in the regular service both of the King and the great Earls. The Saxon name for such a messenger was *bode*, and when employed in hostile negotiations, he was styled *war-bode*. The messengers between Godwin and the King would seem, by the general sense of the chronicles, to have been certain thegns acting as mediators.

Note (*h*), page 278.

The Fylgia, or Tutelary Spirit.

This lovely superstition in the Scandinavian belief is the more remarkable because it does not appear in the creed of the Germanic Teutons, and is closely allied with the good angel, or guardian genius, of the Persians. It forms, therefore, one of the arguments that favor the Asiatic origin of the Norsemen.

The Fylgia (*following*, or attendant, spirit) was always represented as a female. Her influence was not uniformly favorable, though such was its general characteristic. She was capable of revenge if neglected, but had the devotion of her sex when properly treated. Mr. Grenville Pigott, in his popular work, entitled "A Manual of Scandinavian Mythology," relates an interesting legend with respect to one of these supernatural ladies:—

A Scandinavian warrior, Halfred Vandrædakald, having embraced Christianity, and being attacked by a disease which he thought mortal, was naturally anxious that a spirit who had accompanied him through his pagan career should not attend him into that other world, where

* For authorities for the above sketch, and for many interesting details of Lanfranc's character, see Orderic. Vital. Hen. de Knyghton, lib. ii. Gervasius; and the life of Lanfranc, to be found in the collection of his Works, etc.

her society might involve him in disagreeable consequences. The persevering Fylgia, however, in the shape of a fair maiden, walked on the waves of the sea after her viking's ship. She came thus in sight of all the crew; and Halfred, recognizing his Fylgia, told her point blank that their connection was at an end for ever. The forsaken Fylgia had a high spirit of her own, and she then asked Thorold "if he would take her." Thorold ungallantly refused; but Halfred the younger said, "Maiden, I will take thee." *

In the various Norse Saga there are many anecdotes of these spirits, who are always charming, because, with their less earthly attributes, they always blend something of the woman. The poetry embodied in their existence is of a softer and more humane character than that common with the stern and vast demons of the Scandinavian mythology.

Note (*i*), page 282.

The Origin of Earl Godwin.

SHARON TURNER quotes from the Knytlinga Saga what he calls "an explanation of Godwin's carcer or parentage, which no other document affords;" viz.—"that Ulf, a Danish chief, after the battle of Skorstein, between Canute and Edmund Ironsides, pursued the English fugitives into a wood, lost his way, met, on the morning, a Saxon youth driving cattle to their pasture, asked him to direct him in safety to Canute's ships, and offered him the bribe of a gold ring for his guidance: the young herdsman refused the bribe, but sheltered the Dane in the cottage of his father (who is represented as a mere peasant), and conducted him the next morning to the Danish camp; previously to which, the youth's father represented to Ulf, that his son, Godwin, could never, after aiding a Dane to escape, rest in safety with his countrymen, and besought him to befriend his son's fortunes with Canute." The Dane promised, and kept his word: hence Godwin's rise. Thierry, in his "History of the Norman Conquest," tells the same story, on the authority of Torfæus, Hist. Rer. Norweg. Now I need not say to any scholar in our early history, that the Norse Chronicles, abounding with romance and legend, are never to be received as authorities *counter* to our own records, though occasionally valuable to supply omissions in the latter; and, unfortunately for this pretty story, we have *against* it the direct statements of the very best authorities we possess, viz. the Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester. The Saxon Chronicle expressly tells us that Godwin's father was Childe of Sussex (Florence calls him minister or thegn of Sussex †), and that Wulnoth was nephew to Edric, the all-powerful Earl or Duke of Mercia. Florence confirms this statement, and gives the pedigree, which may be deduced as follows:—

Edric married Edgith, daughter of King Ethelred II.	Egelric, surnamed Leofwine.
	Egelmar.
	Wolnoth.
	Godwin.

Thus this "old peasant," as the North Chronicles call Wolnoth, was, according to our most unquestionable authorities, a thegn of one of the most important divisions in England, and a member of the most powerful family in the kingdom! Now, if our Saxon authorities needed any aid from probabilities, it is scarcely worth asking which is the more probable, that the son of a Saxon herdsman should in a few years rise to such power as to marry the sister of the royal Danish Conqueror—or that that honor should be conferred on the most able member of a house already allied to Saxon royalty, and which evidently retained its power after the fall of its head, the treacherous Edric Streone! Even after the Conquest, one of Streone's nephews, Edrens Sylvaticus, is mentioned (Simon. Dunelm.) as "a very powerful thegn." Upon the whole, the account given of Godwin's rise in the text of the work appears the most correct that conjectures, based on our scanty historical information, will allow.

In 1009 A. D., Wolnoth, the Childe or Thegn of Sussex, defeats the fleets of Ethelred, under his uncle Brightric, and goes therefore into rebellion. Thus when, in 1014 (five years afterwards), Canute is chosen king by all the fleet, it is probable that Wolnoth, and Godwin his son, espoused his cause; and that Godwin, subsequently presented to Canute as a young noble of great promise, was favored by that sagacious king, and ultimately honored with the hand, first of his sister, secondly of his niece, as a mode of conciliating the Saxon thegns.

Note (*k*), page 338.

The want of Fortresses in England.

THE Saxons were sad destroyers. They destroyed the strongholds which the Briton had received from the Roman, and built very few others. Thus the land was left open to the Danes. Alfred, sensible of this defect, repaired the walls of London, and other cities, and urgently recommended his nobles and prelates to build fortresses, but could not persuade them. His great-souled daughter, Elfleda, was the only imitator of his example. She built eight castles in three years.*

It was thus that in a country, in which the general features do not allow of protracted warfare, the inhabitants were always at the hazard of a single pitched battle. Subsequent to the conquest, in the reign of John, it was, in truth, the strong castle of Dover, on the siege of which Prince Louis lost so much time, that saved the realm of England from passing to a French dynasty; and as, in later periods, strongholds fell again into decay, so it is remarkable to observe how easily the country was overrun after any signal victory of one of the contending parties. In this truth, the Wars of the Roses abound with much instruction. The handful of foreign mercenaries with which Henry VII. won his crown,—though the real heir, the Earl of Warwick (granting Edward IV.'s children to be illegitimate, which they clearly were according to the rites of the Church), had never lost his claim, by the defeat of Richard at Bosworth;—the march of the Pretender to Derby,—the dismay it spread throughout England,—and the certainty of his conquest had he proceeded;—the easy victory of William III. at a time when certainly the bulk of the nation was opposed to his cause;—are all facts pregnant with warnings, to which we are as blind as we were in the days of Alfred.

Note (*l*), page 350.

The Ruins of Penmaen-mawr.

IN Camden's *Britannia* there is an account of the remarkable relics assigned, in the text, to the last refuge of Gryffyth ap Llewellyn, taken from a manuscript by Sir John Wynne in the time of Charles I. In this account are minutely described, "ruinous walls of an exceeding strong fortification, compassed with a treble wall, and, within each wall, the foundations of at least one hundred towers, about six yards in diameter within the walls. This castle seems (while it stood) impregnable; there being no way to offer any assault on it, the hill being so very high, steep and rocky, and the walls of such strength,—the way or entrance into it ascending with many turnings, so that one hundred men might defend themselves against a whole legion; and yet it should seem that there were lodgings within those walls for twenty thousand men.

"By the tradition we receive from our ancestors, this was the strongest refuge, or place of defence, that the an-

* Pigott's Scand. Mythol. p. 369. Half. Vand. Saga.
† "Suthsaxonum Ministrum Wolfnothem." Flor. Wig.

* Asser, de Reb. Gest. Alf. pp. 17, 18.

cient Britons had in all Snowdon, moreover, the greatness of the work shows that it was a princely fortification, strengthened by nature and workmanship."*

But in the year 1771, Governor Pownall ascended Penmaen-mawr, inspected these remains, and published his account in the Archælogia, vol. iii. p. 303, with a sketch both of the mount and the walls at the summit. The Governor is of opinion that it never was a fortification. He thinks that the inward enclosure contained a carn (or arch-Druid's sepulchre), that there is not room for any lodgement, that the walls are not of a kind which can form a cover, and give at the same time the advantage of fighting from them. In short, that the place was one of the Druids' consecrated high places of worship. He adds, however, that "Mr. Pennant has gone twice over it, intends to make an actual survey, and anticipates much from that great antiquary's knowledge and accuracy."

We turn next to Mr. Pennant, and we find him giving a flat contradiction to the Governor. "I have more than once," † says he, "visited this noted rock, to view the fortifications described by the editor of Camden, from some notes of that sensible old baronet, Sir John Wynne, of Gwidir, *and have found his account very just.*

"The fronts of three, if not four walls, presented themselves very distinctly one above the other. I measured the height of one wall, which was at the time nine feet, the thickness seven feet and a half." (Now, Governor Pownall also measured the walls, agrees pretty well with Pennant as to their width, but makes them only five feet high.) "Between these walls, in all parts, were innumerable small buildings, mostly circular. These had been much higher, as is evident from the fall of stones which lie scattered at their bottoms, and probably had once the form of towers, as Sir John asserts. Their diameter is, in *general*, from twelve to eighteen feet (ample room here for lodgement); the walls were in certain places intersected with others equally strong. This stronghold of the Britons is exactly of the same kind with those on Carn Madryn, Carn Boduan, and Tre'r Caer.

"This was most judiciously chosen to cover the passage into Anglesea, and the remoter part of their country; and must, from its *vast strength*, have been invulnerable, except by famine; being inaccessible by its natural steepness towards the sea, and on the parts fortified in the manner described." So far, Pennant *versus* Pownall! "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" The opinion of both these antiquarians is liable to demur. Governor Pownall might probably be a better judge of military defences than Pennant; but he evidently forms his notions of defence with imperfect knowledge of the forts, which would have amply sufficed for the warfare of the ancient Britons; and moreover, he was one of those led astray by Bryant's crotchets as to "High places," etc. What appears most probable is, that the place was *both* carn and fort; that the strength of the place, and the convenience of stones, suggested the surrounding the narrow area of the central sepulchre with walls, intended for refuge and defence. As to the *circular* buildings, which seem to have puzzled these antiquaries, it is strange that they appear to have overlooked the accounts which serve best to explain them. Strabo says that "the houses of the Britons were round, with a high pointed covering;" Cæsar says that they were only lighted by the door; in the Antonine Column they are represented as *circular*, with an arched entrance, single or double. They were always small, and seem to have contained but a single room. These circular buildings were not, therefore, necessarily Druidical cells, as has been supposed; nor perhaps actual towers, as contended for by Sir John Wynne; but habitations, after the usual fashion of British houses, for the inmates or garrison of the enclosure. Taking into account the traditions of the spot mentioned by Sir John Wynne, and other traditions still existing, which mark, in the immediate neighborhood, the scenes of legendary battles, it is hoped that the reader will accept the description in the text as suggesting, amidst conflicting authorities, the most probable supposition of the nature and character of these very interesting remains in the eleventh century,* and during the most memorable invasion of Wales (under Harold), which occurred between the time of Geraint, or Arthur, and that of Henry II.

* Camden, Caernarvonshire.
† Pennant's Wales, vol. ii. p. 146.

Note (*m*), page 350.

The Idol Bel.

Mons. Johanneau considers that Bel, or Belinus, is derived from the Greek, a surname of Apollo, and means the archer; from Belos, a dart or arrow. †

I own I think this among the spurious conceits of the learned, suggested by vague affinities of name. But it is quite as likely (if there be anything in the conjecture), that the Celt taught the Greek, as that the Greek taught the Celt.

There are some very interesting questions, however, for scholars to discuss: viz. 1st. *When* did the Celts first introduce idols? 2d, Can we believe the classical authorities that assure us that the Druids originally admitted no idol worship? If so, we find the chief idols of the Druids cited by Lucan; and they therefore acquired them long before Lucan's time. From whom would they acquire them? Not from the Romans; for the Roman gods are not the least similar to the Celtic, when the last are fairly examined. Not from the Teutons, from whose deities those of the Celt equally differ. Have we not given too much faith to the classic writers, who assert the original simplicity of the Druid worship? And will not their popular idols be found to be as ancient as the remotest traces of the Celtic existence? Would not the Cimmerii have transported them from the period of their first traditional immigration from the East? and is not their Bel identical with the Babylonian deity?

† Johann. ap. Acad. Celt. tom. iii. p. 151.

Note (*n*), page 369.

Unguents used by Witches.

Lord Bacon, speaking of the ointments used by the witches, supposes that they really did produce illusions by stopping the vapors and sending them to the head. It seems that all witches who attended the *sabbat* used these unguents, and there is something very remarkable in the concurrence of their testimonies as to the scenes they declared themselves to have witnessed, not in the body, which they left behind, but as present in the soul; as if the same anointments and preparatives produced dreams nearly similar in kind. To the believers in mesmerism I may add, that few are aware of the extraordinary degree to which somnabulism appears to be heightened by certain chemical aids; and the disbelievers in that agency, who have yet tried the experiments of some of those now neglected drugs to which the medical art of the Middle Ages attached peculiar virtues, will not be inclined to dispute the powerful, and, as it were, systematic effect which certain drugs produce on the imagination of patients with excitable and nervous temperaments.

Note (*o*), page 371.

Hilda's Adjurations.

I.

"By the Urdar fount dwelling,
Day by day from the rill,
The Norns besprinkle
The Ash Ygg-drasill."

The Ash Ygg-drasill.—Much learning has been employed by Scandinavian scholars in illustrating the symbols supposed to be couched under the myth of the Ygg-

* The ruins still extant are much diminished since the time even of Pownall or Pennant; and must be indeed inconsiderable, compared with the buildings or walls which existed at the date of my tale.

drasill or the great Ash-tree. With this I shall not weary the reader; especially since large systems have been built on very small premises, and the erudition employed has been equally ingenious and unsatisfactory: I content myself with stating the simple myth.

The Ygg-drasill has three roots; two spring from the infernal regions—*i. e.* from the home of the frost-giants, and from Niffl-heim, "vapor-home, or hell"—one from the heavenly abode of the Asas. Its branches, says the Prose Edda, extend over the whole universe, and its stem bears up the earth. Beneath the root, which stretches through Niffl-heim, and which the snake-king continually gnaws, is the fount whence flow the infernal rivers. Beneath the root, which stretches in the land of the giants, is Mimir's well wherein all wisdom is concealed; but under the root which lies in the land of the gods, is the well of Urda, the Norna—here the gods sit in judgment. Near this well is a fair building, whence issue the three maidens, Urda, Verdandi, Skulda (the Past, the Present, the Future). Daily they water the ash-tree from Urda's well, that the branches may not perish. Four harts constantly devour the buds and branches of the Ash-tree. On its boughs sits an eagle, wise in much; and between its eyes sits a hawk. A squirrel runs up and down the tree sowing strife between the eagle and the snake.

Such, in brief, is the account of the myth. For the various interpretations of its symbolic meaning the general reader is referred to Mr. Blackwell's edition of MALLETT'S *Northern Antiquities*, and PIGOTT'S *Scandinavian Manual*.

Note (*p*), page 424.

Harold's Accession.

THERE are, as is well known, two accounts as to Edward the Confessor's death-bed disposition of the English crown. The Norman chroniclers affirm, first, that Edward promised William the crown during his exile in Normandy; secondly, that Siward, Earl of Northumbria, Godwin, and Leofric had taken oath, "*serment de la main*," to receive him as Seigneur after Edward's death, and that the hostages, Wolnoth and Haco, were given to the Duke in pledge of that oath;* thirdly, that Edward left him the crown by will.

Let us see what probability there is of truth in these three assertions.

First, Edward promised William the crown when in Normandy.

This seems probable enough, and it is corroborated indirectly by the Saxon chroniclers, when they unite in relating Edward's warnings to Harold against his visit to the Norman court. Edward might well be aware of William's designs on the crown (though in those warnings he refrains from mentioning them)—might remember the authority given to those designs by his own early promise, and know the secret purpose for which the hostages were retained by William, and the advantages he would seek to gain from having Harold himself in his power. But this promise in itself was clearly not binding on the English people, nor on any one but Edward, who, without the sanction of the Witan, could not fulfil it. And that William himself could not have attached great importance to it during Edward's life, is clear, because, if he had, the time to urge it was when Edward sent into Germany for the Atheling, as the heir presumptive of the throne. This was a virtual annihilation of the promise; but William took no step to urge it, made no complaint and no remonstrance.

Secondly, That Godwin, Siward, and Leofric, had taken oaths of fealty to William.

This appears a fable wholly without foundation. When could those oaths have been pledged? Certainly not after Harold's visit to William, for they were then all dead. At the accession of Edward? This is obviously contradicted by the stipulation which Godwin and the other chiefs of the Witan exacted, that Edward should not come accompanied by Norman supporters—by the evident jealousy of the Normans entertained by those chiefs, as by the whole English people, who regarded the alliance of Ethelred with the Norman Emma as the cause of the greatest calamities—and by the marriage of Edward himself with Godwin's daughter, a marriage which that Earl might naturally presume would give legitimate heirs to the throne.—In the interval between Edward's accession and Godwin's outlawry? No; for all the English chroniclers, and, indeed, the Norman, concur in representing the ill will borne by Godwin and his House to the Norman favorites, whom, if they could have anticipated William's accession, or were in any way bound to William, they would have naturally conciliated. But Godwin's outlawry is the result of the breach between him and the foreigners.—In William's visit to Edward? No; for that took place when Godwin was an exile; and even the writers who assert Edward's early promise to William, declare that nothing was then said as to the succession to the throne. To Godwin's return from outlawry the Norman chroniclers seem to refer the date of this pretended oath, by the assertion that the hostages were given in pledge of it. This is the most monstrous supposition of all: for Godwin's return is followed by the banishment of the Norman favorites—by the utter downfall of the Norman party in England—by the decree of the Witan, that all the troubles in England had come from the Normans—by the triumphant ascendancy of Godwin's House. And is it credible for a moment, that the great English Earl could then have agreed to a pledge to transfer the kingdom to the very party he had expelled, and expose himself and his party to the vengeance of a foe he had thoroughly crushed for the time, and whom, without any motive or object, he himself agreed to restore to power for his own probable perdition? When examined, this assertion falls to the ground from other causes.

It is not among the arguments that William uses in his embassies to Harold; it rests mainly upon the authority of William of Poitiers, who, though a contemporary, and a good authority on some points purely Norman, is grossly ignorant as to the most accredited and acknowledged facts, in all that relate to the English. Even with regard to the hostages, he makes the most extraordinary blunders. He says they were sent by Edward, with the consent of his nobles, accompanied by Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury. Now Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, had fled from England as fast as he could fly on the return of Godwin; and arrived in Normandy, half drowned, before the hostages were sent, or even before the Witan which reconciled Edward and Godwin had assembled. He says that William restored to Harold "his young brother:" whereas it was Haco, the nephew, who was restored; we know, by Norman as well as Saxon chroniclers, that Wolnoth, the brother, was not released till after the Conqueror's death, (he was re-imprisoned by Rufus;) and his partiality may be judged by the assertions first, that "William gave nothing to a Norman that was unjustly taken from an Englishman;" and secondly, that Odo, whose horrible oppressions revolted even William himself, "never had an equal for justice, and that all the English obeyed him willingly."

We may, therefore, dismiss this assertion as utterly groundless, on its own merits, without directly citing against it the Saxon authorities.

Thirdly, That Edward left William the crown by will.

On this assertion alone, of the three, the Norman Conqueror himself seems to have rested a positive claim.*

* William of Poitiers.

* He is considered to refer to such bequest in one of his charters:—"Devicto Haroldo rege cum suis complicibus qui michi regnum prudentiâ Domini destinatum, et beneficio concessionis Domini et cognati mei gloriosi regis Edwardi concessum conati sunt auferre."—FORESTINA, A. 3.

But William's word is certainly not to be taken, for he never scrupled to break it; and even in these words he does not state that it was left him by Edward's will, but destined and given to him—words founded, perhaps,

But if so, where was the will? Why was it never produced or producible? If destroyed, where were the witnesses? why were they not cited? The testamentary dispositions of an Anglo-Saxon king were always respected, and went far towards the succession. But it was absolutely necessary to prove them before the Witan.* An oral act of this kind, in the words of the dying Sovereign, would be legal, but they must be confirmed by those who heard them. Why, when William was master of England, and acknowledged by a National Assembly convened in London, and when all who heard the dying King would have been naturally disposed to give every evidence in William's favor, not only to flatter the new sovereign, but to soothe the national pride, and justify the Norman succession by a more popular plea than conquest,—why were no witnesses summoned to prove the bequest? Alred, Stigand, and the Abbot of Westminster, must have been present at the death-bed of the King, and these priests concurred in submission to William. If they had any testimony as to Edward's bequest in his favor, would they not have been too glad to give it, in justification of themselves, in compliment to William, in duty to the people, in vindication of law against force! But no such attempt at proof was ventured upon.

Against these, the mere assertion of William, and the authority of Normans who could know nothing of the truth of the matter, while they had every interest to misrepresent the facts—we have the positive assurances of the best possible authorities. The Saxon Chronicle (worth all the other annalists put together), says expressly, that Edward left the crown to Harold:—

> "The sage, ne'ertheless,
> The realm committed
> To a highly-born man;
> Harold's self,
> The noble Earl.
> He in all time
> Obeyed faithfully
> His rightful lord,
> By words and deeds;
> Nor aught neglected
> Which needful was
> To his sovereign king."

Florence of Worcester, the next best authority (valuable from supplying omissions in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle), says expressly that the King chose Harold for his successor before his decease,† that he was elected by the chief men of all England, and consecrated by Alred. Hoveden, Simon (Dunelm.), the Beverley chronicler, confirm these authorities as to Edward's choice of Harold as his successor. William of Malmesbury, who is not partial to Harold, writing in the reign of Henry the First, has doubts himself as to Edward's bequest (though grounded on a very bad argument, viz. "the improbability that Edward would leave his crown to a man of whose power he had always been jealous;" there is no proof that Edward had been jealous of *Harold's* power—he had been of *Godwin's*); but Malmesbury gives a more valuable authority than his own, in the concurrent opinion of his time, for he deposes that "*the English say*," the diadem was granted him (Harold) by the King.

These evidences are, to say the least, infinitely more worthy of historical credence than the one or two English chroniclers, of little comparative estimation (such as Wike), and the prejudiced and ignorant Norman chroniclers,‡ who depose on behalf of William. I assume, therefore, that Edward left the crown to Harold; of Harold's better claim in the election of the Witan, there is no doubt. But Sir F. Palgrave starts the notion that, "admitting that the prelates, earls, aldermen, and thanes of Wessex and East-Anglia had sanctioned the accession of Harold, their decision could not have been obligatory on the other kingdoms (provinces); and the very short time elapsing between the death of Edward and the recognition of Harold, utterly precludes the supposition that their consent was even asked." This great writer must permit me, with all reverence, to suggest that he has, I think, forgotten the fact, that just prior to Edward's death, an assembly, fully as numerous as ever met in any national Witan, had been convened to attend the consecration of the new abbey and church of Westminster, which Edward considered the great work of his life; that assembly would certainly not have dispersed during a period so short and anxious as the mortal illness of the King, which appears to have prevented his attending the ceremony in person, and which ended in his death a very few days after the consecration. So that during the interval, which appears to have been at most about a week, between Edward's death and Harold's coronation,* the unusually large concourse of prelates and nobles from all parts of the kingdom assembled in London and Westminster, would have furnished the numbers requisite to give weight and sanction to the Witan. And had it not been so, the Saxon chroniclers, and still more the Norman, would scarcely have omitted some remark in qualification of the election. But not a word is said as to any inadequate number in the Witan. And as for the two great principalities of Northumbria and Mercia, Harold's recent marriage with the sister of their earls might naturally tend to secure their allegiance.

Nor is it to be forgotten that a very numerous Witan had assembled at Oxford a few months before, to adjudge the rival claims of Tostig and Morcar; the decision of the Witan proves the alliance between Harold's party and that of the young earls—ratified by the marriage with Aldyth. And he who has practically engaged in the contests and cabals of party, will allow the probability, adopted as fact in the romance, that, considering Edward's years and infirm health, and the urgent necessity of determining beforehand the claims to the succession—some actual, if secret, understanding was then come to by the leading chiefs. It is a common error in history to regard as sudden, that which in the nature of affairs never can be sudden. All that paved Harold's way to the throne must have been silently settled long before the day in which the Witan elected him *unanimi omnium consensu*.†

With the views to which my examination of the records of the time have led me in favor of Harold, I cannot but think that Sir F. Palgrave, in his admirable History of Anglo-Saxon England, does scanty justice to the Last of its kings; and that his peculiar political and constitutional theories, and his attachment to the principle of hereditary succession, which make him consider that Harold "had no clear title to the crown any way," tinctures with something like the prejudice of party his estimate of Harold's character and pretensions. My profound admiration for Sir F. Palgrave's learning and judgment, would not permit me to make this remark without carefully considering and re-weighing all the contending authorities on which he himself relies. And I own that, of all modern historians, Thierry seems to me to have given the most just idea of the great actors in

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solely on the promise referred to, before Edward came to the throne, corroborated by some messages in the earlier years of his reign, through the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, who seems to have been a notable intriguer to that end.

* Palgrave, "Commonwealth," 560.

† "Quo tumulato, subregulus Haroldus Godwin Ducis filius, quem rex ante suam decessionem regni successorem elegerat, a totius Angliæ primatibus, ad regale culmen electus, die eodem ab Aldredo Eboracensi Archiepiscopo in regem est honorifice consecratus."—FLOR. *Wig.*

‡ Some of these Norman Chroniclers tell an absurd story of Harold seizing the crown from the hand of the bishop, and putting it himself on his head. The Bayeux Tapestry, which is William's most connected apology for his claim, shows no such violence; but Harold is represented as crowned very peaceably. With more art (as I have observed elsewhere), the Tapestry represents Stigand as crowning him instead of Alred; Stigand being at that time under the Pope's interdict.

* Edward died Jan. 5th. Harold's coronation is said to have taken place Jan. the 12th; but there is no very satisfactory evidence as to the precise day; indeed some writers would imply that he was crowned the day after Edward's death, which is scarcely possible.

† Vit. Harold. Chron. Ang. Norm.

the tragedy of the Norman invasion, though I incline to believe that he has overrated the oppressive influence of the Norman dynasty in which the tragedy closed.

Note (*q*), page 432.

Physical Peculiarities of the Scandinavians.

"It is a singular circumstance, that in almost all the swords of those ages to be found in the collection of weapons in the Antiquarian Museum at Copenhagen, the handles indicate a size of hand very much smaller than the hands of modern people of any class or rank. No modern dandy, with the most delicate hands, would find room for his hand to grasp or wield with ease some of the swords of these Northmen." *

This peculiarity is by some scholars adduced, not without reason, as an argument for the Eastern origin of the Scandinavian. Nor was it uncommon for the Asiatic Scythians, and indeed many of the early warlike tribes fluctuating between the east and west of Europe, to be distinguished by the blue eyes and yellow hair of the north. The physical attributes of a deity, or a hero, are usually to be regarded as those of the race to which he belongs. The golden locks of Apollo and Achilles are the sign of a similar characteristic in the nations of which they are the types; and the blue eye of Minerva belies the absurd doctrine that would identify her with the Egyptian Naith.

The Norman retained perhaps longer than the Scandinavian, from whom he sprang, the somewhat effeminate peculiarity of small hands and feet; and hence, as throughout all the nobility of Europe the Norman was the model for imitation, and the ruling families in many lands sought to trace from him their descents, so that characteristic is, even to our day, ridiculously regarded as a sign of noble race. The Norman probably retained that peculiarity longer than the Dane, because his habits, as a conqueror, made him disdain all manual labor; and it was below his knightly dignity to walk, as long as a horse could be found for him to ride. But the Anglo-Norman (the noblest specimen of the great conquering family), became so blent with the Saxon, both in blood and in habits, that such physical distinctions vanished with the age of chivalry. The Saxon blood in our highest aristocracy now predominates greatly over the Norman; and it would be as vain a task to identify the sons of Hastings and Rollo by the foot and hand of the old Asiatic Scythian, as by the reddish auburn hair and the high features which were no less ordinarily their type. Here and there such peculiarities may all be seen amongst plain country gentlemen, settled from time immemorial in the counties peopled by the Anglo-Danes, and inter-marrying generally in their own provinces; but amongst the far more mixed breed of the larger landed proprietors comprehended in the Peerage, the Saxon attributes of race are strikingly conspicuous, and, amongst them, the large hand and foot common with all the Germanic tribes.

* Laing's Note to Snorro Sturleson, vol. iii. p. 101.

Note (*r*), page 481.

The interment of Harold.

Here we are met by evidences of the most contradictory character. According to most of the English writers, the body of Harold was given by William to Githa, without ransom, and buried at Waltham. There is even a story told of the generosity of the Conqueror, in cashiering a soldier who gashed the corpse of the dead hero. This last, however, seems to apply to some other Saxon, and not to Harold. But William of Poitiers, who was the Duke's own chaplain, and whose narration of the battle appears to contain more internal evidence of accuracy than the rest of his chronicle, expressly says, that William refused Githa's offer of its weight in gold for the supposed corpse of Harold, and ordered it to be buried on the beach with the taunt quoted in the text of this work—"Let him guard the coasts which he madly occupied;" and on the pretext that one, whose cupidity and avarice had been the cause that so many men were slaughtered and lay unsepultured, was not worthy himself of a tomb. Orderic confirms this account, and says the body was given to William Mallet, for that purpose.*

Certainly, William de Poitiers ought to have known best; and the probability of his story is to a certain degree borne out by the uncertainty as to Harold's positive interment, which long prevailed, and which even gave rise to a story related by Giraldus Cambrensis (and to be found also in the Harleian MSS.), that Harold survived the battle, became a monk in Chester, and before he died had a long and secret interview with Henry the First. Such a legend, however absurd, could scarcely have gained any credit if (as the usual story runs) Harold had been formally buried, in the presence of many of the Norman barons, in Waltham Abbey—but would very easily creep into belief, if his body had been carelessly consigned to a Norman knight, to be buried privately by the sea shore.

The story of Osgood and Ailred, the childemaister (schoolmaster in the monastery), as related by Palgrave, and used in this Romance, is recorded in a MS. of Waltham Abbey, and was written somewhere about fifty or sixty years after the event—say at the beginning of the twelfth century. These two monks followed Harold to the field, placed themselves so as to watch its results, offered ten marks for the body, obtained permission for the search, and could not recognize the mutilated corpse until Osgood sought and returned with Edith. In point of fact, according to this authority, it must have been two or three days after the battle before the discovery was made.

* This William Mallet was the father of Robert Mallet, founder of the Priory of Eye, in Suffolk (a branch of the house of Mallet de Graville).—PLUQUET. He was also the ancestor of the great William Mallet (or Malet, as the old Scandinavian name was now corruptly spelt), one of the illustrious twenty-five "conservators" of Magna Charta. The family is still extant; and I have to apologize to Sir Alexander Malet, Bart. (Her Majesty's Minister at Stuttgard), Lieut.-Col. Charles St. Le Malet, the Rev. William Windham Malet (Vicar of Ardley), and other members of that ancient House, for the liberty taken with the name of their gallant forefather.